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THE HOODED HORSEMAN

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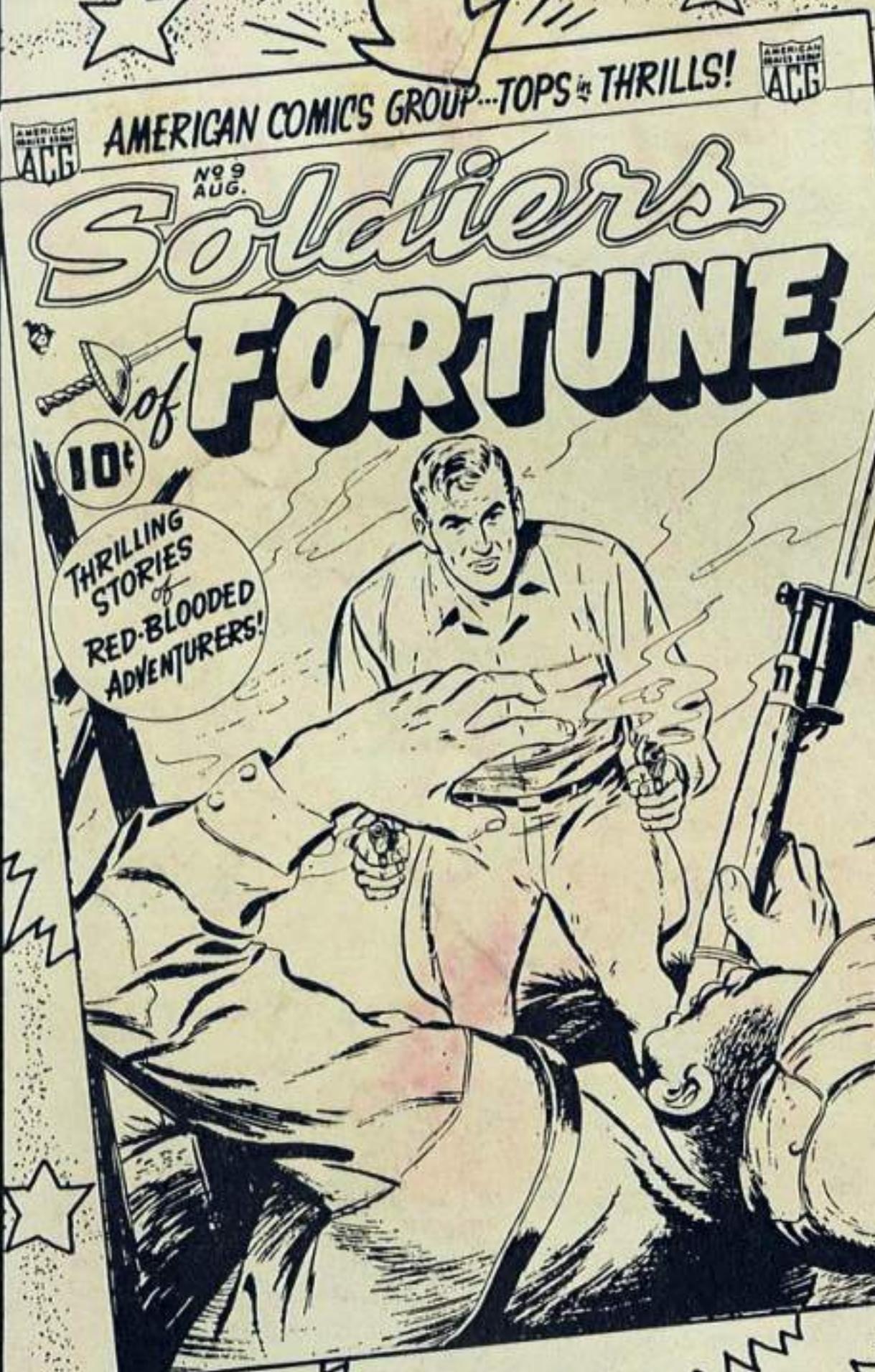
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ON ALL
STANDS!

The HOODED HORSEMAN

WHO IS THE HOODED HORSEMAN? A SINGLE INCIDENT MADE THIS DARK-GARBED FIGURE AS HARD AS THE JAWS OF A STEEL TRAP-- AND THAT WAS THE COWARDLY AMBUSH OF HIS FATHER, THE SHERIFF OF MESA CITY! IT WAS THEN THAT BUD FRASER BUCKLED ON HIS FATHER'S GUNS-- IT WAS THEN THAT HIS EYES TOOK ON THE SEARCHING GLINT THAT BADMEN WOULD COME TO FEAR-- WHEN HE GALLOPS ON THE TRAIL OF OUTLAWRY AS THE HOODED HORSEMAN!



IN A SMALL WYOMING COW TOWN--

WAL, FLASH-- I RECKON IT'S TIME WE HOLED UP FER A SPELL! I'VE HEARD O' THE VASCO RANCH AN' OTHER BIG OUTFITS HEREABOUTS -- MEBBE I KIN LINE UP A WRANGLER'S JOB!



HOWDY, PARDNER! LOOK! WE MEbbe Yuh Kin WERE JEST TELL ME IF THAR'S WONDERIN' ANY CHANCE O' WHAR WE'D GITTIN' WORK FIND A IN THESE STRANGER-- HOW PARTS! ABOUT THAT GALOOT?



AMIGO-- MEBBE YUH AN' ME KIN GIT TOGETHER! STRETCH BRANDON'S MUH NAME-- WHAT'S YORES?



BUD FRASER!

FOR A MOMENT, BUD SCANS THE SCARRED FACE AND DROOPING EYELIDS--AND SUDDENLY REMEMBERS! TWELVE YEARS BEFORE...

THAR'S NO ROOM IN MESA CITY FOR YORE KIND, BRANDON! HIT THE TRAIL--SAYVY?



CRIMPERS, DAD--YUH SHORE MADE 'IM KNUCKLE UNDER! WHO'S THAT WADDY YUH WERE DRESSIN' DOWN?

BUD, IF THAR WAS EVER A SHIFTY, BACK-SHOOTIN' BUZZARD--IT'S STRETCH BRANDON! I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TUH CATCH 'IM REDHANDED--BUT ONE O' THESE DAYS--HE'S GOIN' TUH MAKE A MISTAKE!



IT ISN'T LIKELY THAT STRETCH BRANDON REMEMBERED THE SHERIFF OF MESA CITY--OR PERHAPS HE WOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED THE SAME STEADY GAZE THAT CONFRONTED HIM NOW--FROM THE EYES OF HIS SON!

WHAT'S YORE DEAL, BRANDON? I'M LOOKIN' FER A WADDY WHO KIN TAKE ORDERS AN' MAKE HIMSELF USEFUL! IF YUH'RE INTERESTED--I WANT YUH TUH GIT SOMETHIN' FER ME AT THE VASCO RANCH TONIGHT! YUH'LL FIND A GAL THAR NAMED JUANITA--JEST TELL HER STRETCH BRANDON SENT YUH!

THAT NIGHT-- STRETCH BRANDON'S UP TUH SOMETHIN', FLASH--AN' IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEE TUH TRAIL THOSE TWO PARDS O' HIS FIRST!



MILES BEYOND--ON A MOONLIT SLOPE OVERLOOKING THE VASCO RANCH--

THEY'RE DISMOUNTIN' WITH CARBINES--AN' THAT MEANS LONG RANGE GUNPLAY! I'D BETTER SNEAK UP ON 'EM--FAST!



THAT FRASER HOMBRE DOESN'T SAVVY WHAT HE'S GITTIN' INTUH--BUT JUANITA VASCO'S SHORE TUH OPEN FIRE THE MINUTE HE MENTION'S STRETCH'S NAME!

BEIN' A GAL, SHE'LL LIKELY MISS--BUT THAT WON'T SAVE HIS HIDE--BECAUSE WE'LL BE FIRIN' AT THE SAME TIME!

RECKON I MIGHT AS WELL SAVE YUH POLECATS SOME AMMUNITION! REACH!

SUFFERIN' SASSAFRAS-- BUD FRASER!





SECONDS LATER, INSIDE THE RANCH HOUSE ...

JUANITA,
THERE IS
A RIDER
OUTSIDE...
A STRANGER!

THIS TIME, I'M READY!
FOR WEEKS, I'VE BEEN
MENACED BY STRETCH
BRANDON AND HIS
HENCHMEN -- AND IF
THIS IS ONE OF THEM...
I'M GOING TO CARRY
OUT MY THREAT!

KEEP MOUNTED,
STATE YOUR
BUSINESS --
AND DON'T
WASTE WORDS!

RECKON
YUH'LL KNOW
THE WADDY
WHO SENT
ME -- STRETCH
BRANDON!

THIS WILL TEACH YOU TO
HEED A WARNING FROM
JUANITA VASCO!



RECKON THIS'LL LOOK PURTY CONVINCIN' -- I'VE
CAUGHT ONE FOOT IN THE STIRRUP!
GIT MOVIN', BRONC!

CARAMBA! IF HE
IS NOT DEAD NOW,
JUANITA -- HE WILL
BE BY THE TIME
HIS HORSE COMES
TO A HALT!

PANCHO -- WHAT HAVE I
DONE? IF HE IS ONE
OF STRETCH BRANDON'S
OUTLAWS, I MEANT
ONLY TO DRIVE HIM
AWAY, NOT KILL HIM!



MINUTES LATER --

MEBBE YUH THOUGHT BUD
FRASER WAS A PUSHOVER,
STRETCH -- BUT WE LEARNED
DIFFERENT! HE JUMPED
US -- AFTER FINDIN' US
READY FER AN AMBUSH!

SIMMER DOWN! HE WAS
LOCO ENOUGH TUH RIDE
DOWN TUH THE RANCH
AFTER GITTIN' YUH TWO
CORRALED -- AN' I GOT
THAR JEST IN TIME
TUH SEE WHAT
HAPPENED!



HOPPIN' HORNED
TOADS, STRETCH --
YUH MEAN
JUANITA
PLUGGED
HIM AFTER
ALL?

YEP -- AN' SHE DID A GOOD
JOB! WE'RE SHORE TUH
FIND HIS CARCASS OUT IN
THE BRUSH WHAR HIS HOSS
DRAGGED HIM -- AFTER I'VE
HAD A PALAVER WITH
THAT GAL!



MEANWHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE
FROM THE RANCH --

FIRST OFF, FLASH-- I'M GITTIN'
INTUH MUH HOODED HORSE-
MAN COSTUME-- AN' THEN
I'VE GOT A JOB
FER YUH!

WUF!

SOON-- THAT GASH ON MUH LEG
GAVE ME A CHANCE TUH
FAKE A FEW BLOODSTAINS-- AN'
FLASH KIN DO THE REST! HERE,
BOY! GRAB THESE DUDS--
CHEW 'EM UP!

WITH FLASH CERTAIN THAT THE
HOODED HORSEMAN IS URGING
HIM INTO SOME KIND OF
STRANGE NEW GAME--



RIDERS! THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH,
FLASH-- DUCK BEHIND THIS ROCK!



WHOA! TAKE A LOOK, JUANITA! YOU MEAN THE MAN
THAR'S WHAT'S LEFT O' BUD FRASER! I SHOT? BUT WHAT
HAPPENED TO HIS BODY?

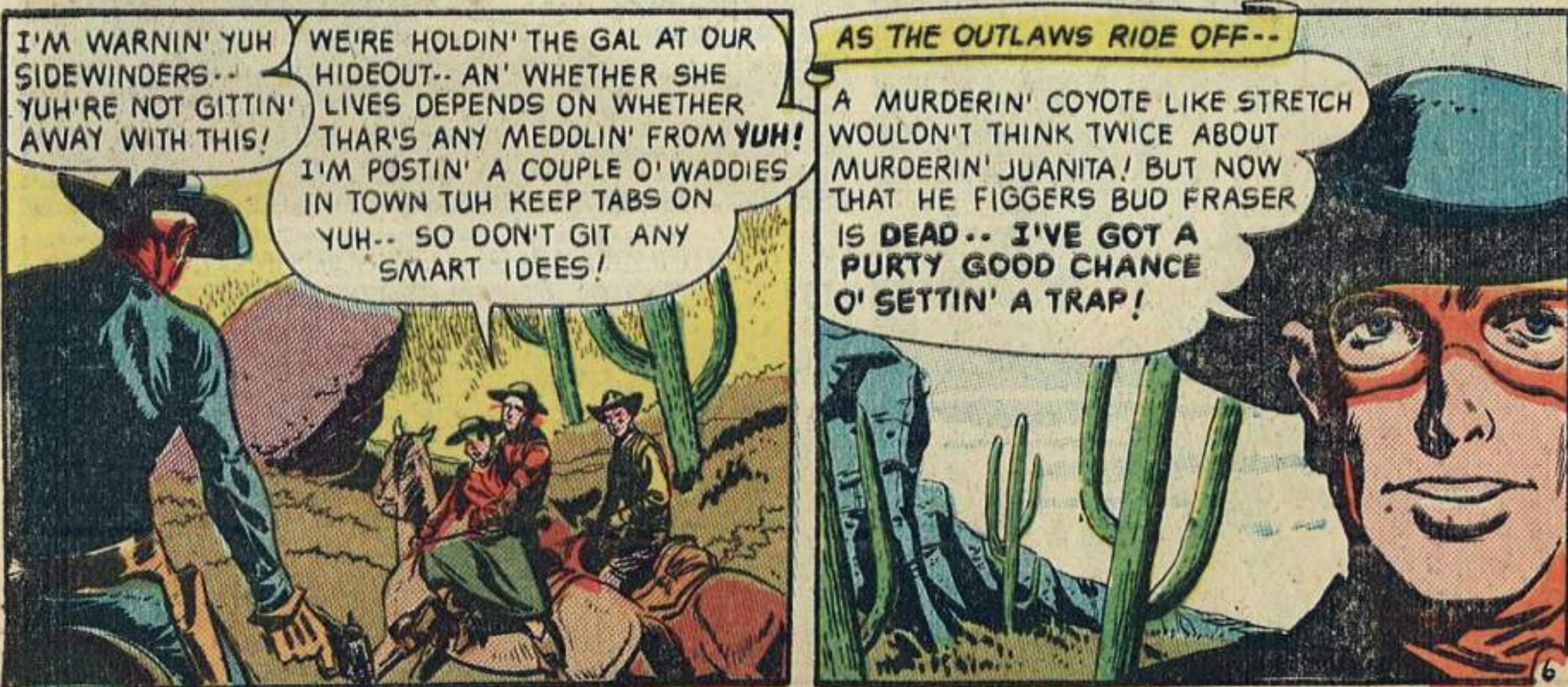
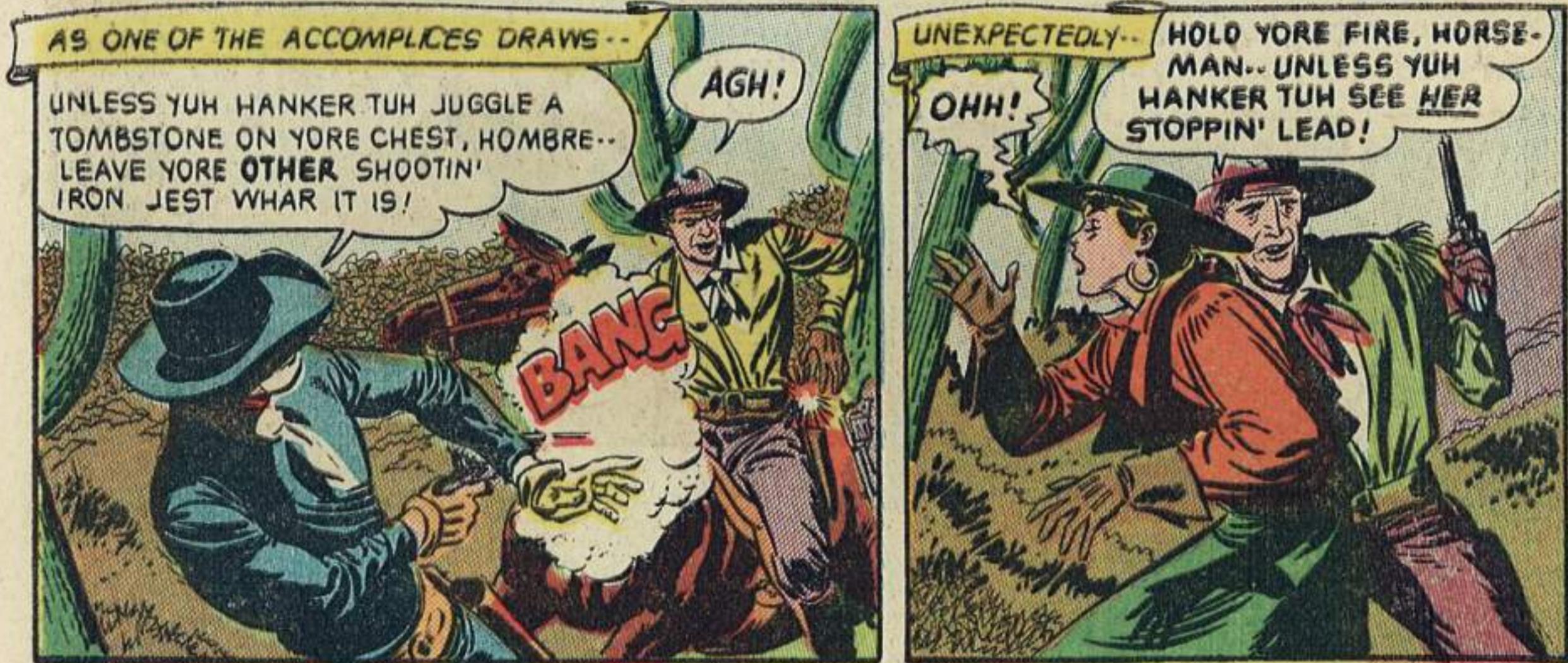


JUDGIN' BY THESE PAW PRINTS--
AN' THE WAY HIS OUTFIT'S RIPPED
TUH SHREDS-- THE ANSWER IS
COYOTES! THOSE SKULKIN'
CRITTERS FINISHED OFF THE
REMAINS, JUANITA -- BUT
YUH DID THE
MURDERIN'!



I... I DIDN'T MEAN GAL-- EVERYONE IN THE ROYAL
TO! I THOUGHT FLUSH SALOON HEARD THIS
HE WAS ONE GALOOT SAY HE WAS RIDIN' OUT TUH
OF YOUR SEE YUH ABOUT A JOB! MEBBE
MEN-- THEY'LL FIGGER HE CHANGED HIS MIND
AND LEFT FER OTHER PARTS-- BUT
THAT'LL DEPEND ON WHETHER
I KEEP QUIET!





NEXT DAY, IN A GULLY NEAR
THE VASCO RANCH--

IT'S A GOOD THING I HAD A
SPARE OUTFIT IN MUH SADDLE-
BAGS! I COULD RIDE TUH
TOWN AN' TANGLE WITH 'EM
THAR-- BUT I AIM TUH BE
SHORE O' NABBIN' 'EM --
AN' THIS'LL DO IT!

FLASH-- GIT TUH TOWN! THE
PLACE I WAS YESTERDAY--
SAVVY? STAY THAR--
WAIT FER ME!



SOON AS HE REACHES TOWN,
HE'LL STOP AT THE ONE PLACE
HE SAW ME GO INTUH-- THE
ROYAL FLUSH SALOON!
AN' IF I KNOW STRETCH
BRANDON'S WADDIES--
THAT'S WHAR THEY'LL
BE HANGIN' OUT!



SOON AFTERWARD--

CRIMPIN' COYOTES--LOOK!
THAT'S BUD FRASER'S DOG--
AN' HE RECOGNIZES US!

WHAT ABOUT IT? ONE UGLY
MOVE OUTA HIM -- AN' HE'S
A DEAD MUTT!

HOLD ON
THAR, GENTS!



NO CALL TO GIT EXCITED-- RECKON THE PUP'S JEST
TRYIN' TUH SHOW YUH HE'S GOT THIS HERE NOTE!



HOPPIN' HORNED TOADS-- IT'S FROM
BUD FRASER! HE'S BADLY SHOT UP--
CAN'T GIT OUT O' MESQUITE
GULCH WITHOUT HELP!

DID YUH SAY
BUD FRASER?



RECKON I'D JEST LEAVE IT
BETTER GIT TUH US, OLD
DOC MITCHELL TIMER -- WE'LL
AN' A COUPLE TAKE CARE O'
O' THE BOYS EVERYTHIN'!
OUT THAR--
PRONTO!

SOON AFTERWARD--

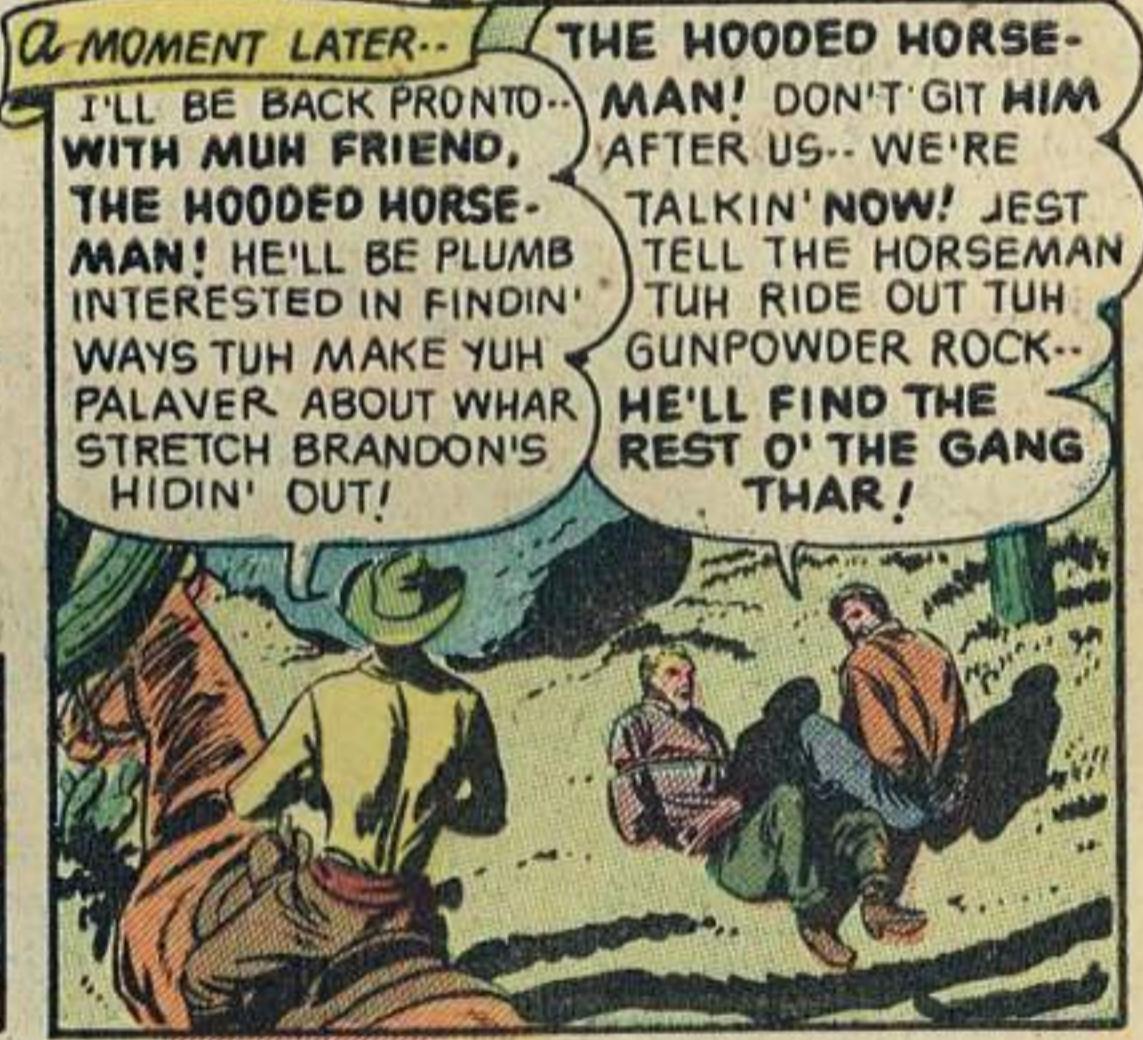
THAR HE
IS-- WAITIN'
FER US!

THIS'LL BE EASY!
ALL WE HAVE TUH
DO IS FINISH HIM
OFF-- AN' SAY HE
WAS DEAD WHEN
WE GOT HERE!

UNEXPECTEDLY--

RECKON I MIGHT AS WELL
SAVE THE CORONER A TRIP,
YUH VARMINTS! THAT
WAS JUST
SMUH BOOT
YUH SAW!

UGH!
BANG!
SMUH BOOT
YUH SAW!



A SHORT DISTANCE BEYOND--

NOW THAT I'VE PROVED BUD FRASER ISN'T DEAD,
JUANITA WON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY
ABOUT-- AN' I KIN SQUARE MUH ACCOUNT
WITH STRETCH AS THE HOODED
HORSEMAN!



AS THE DARK-GARBED AVENGER REACHES
GUNPOWDER ROCK--

CRIMPERS, BRONC--
WATCH OUT!

SUFFERIN'
SASSAFRAS!





THE HOODED HORSEMAN FIGHTS
AGAIN-- QUICK AS A WHIP LASH--
DEADLY AS A MOUNTAIN LION--
IN THE NEXT
ISSUE!

DESERT JUSTICE

A CE BRACK, THE gambler from the East, poured another swallow of whiskey down his gullet, but it didn't relax him. Intently, he watched the hot desert sun beat down mercilessly on the toiling wagoneers, their backs glistening with sweat as they dug deeper into the lonely sands, deep enough to bury Thomason Devers, their wagon leader, who had been murdered the day before.

Ace knew they suspected him. Well, he HAD lost his head in an argument and killed Devers...but they couldn't prove anything, and he certainly wasn't going to confess. No, he wasn't worried, not really, but as he gulped down the remaining liquor he glanced uneasily at Salty, the half-breed guide. For some strange reason Salty had insisted that the wagons drive on another day till they reached the water holes nearby, before burying their leader.

Throwing the empty whiskey bottle away, Ace swaggered to the diggers and said, "I'll lend you boys a hand." A wagoneer looked contemptuously at the neatly dressed gambler. "You...YOU'RE gonna dirty your lily-white paws?" he sneered.

"I'll give Thomason Devers a hand down to the Devil any time," muttered Ace, and instantly regretted it. No use letting anybody know how he felt about Devers; he decided to keep his mouth shut among these strange westerners. As he dug he noticed that the minister was listening intently to something Salty was whispering in his ear, and he fancied that they were talking about him. "Let them talk," he said to himself. "They can't prove anything, and I'm not talking."

Later, when everybody bared their heads under the blazing sun and the minister began his sermon, Ace imagined that somehow the words were intended to scare him into confessing. "He's wasting his time," thought Ace grimly. "I don't believe in all his nonsense about the Devil and damnation and hell-fire." But soon he began

feeling strangely uncomfortable. The minister's words went round and around in his head, and his vision reeled from standing under the burning sky bareheaded for so long. And while the sermon droned on about eternal justice and inevitable retribution, Ace began to feel the liquor he had drunk parching his throat mercilessly. And suddenly the scorching sands under his feet burned his shoe leather and sent to his nostrils an odor faintly akin to the smoking brimstone the minister spoke of.

He was extremely relieved when the service was over and the men shuffled slowly back to the wagons. Salty looked at Ace's flushed face and murmured, "You look awful hot...almost like desert fever."

"Wh...what's desert fever?" mumbled Ace, a cold shiver creeping along his spine.

"Oh...it's nothin'. But you better drink some of that cool water in the spring yonder."

"Yeah...guess so," said Ace, wiping beads of perspiration from his forehead. The ground seemed to heave under his feet as he stumbled towards the water hole in the distance. Something seemed to explode inside his head as he stumbled up to the cooling waters, and suddenly he felt shivers. "D...desert fever!" he mumbled. "It must be...I need water...cool water." But as he bent his parched lips closer he thought he felt even hotter than before, and when he plunged his head in the water hole he screamed, clutched his scalded face, and collapsed muttering, "I...I'm dying...I know I am...it's justice...like the minister said...because I killed a fellow man in...cold blood..."

When the wagoneers picked him up a few minutes later he was still mumbling the same words. "Just a bad case of sunstroke," said Salty to the grim-faced men. "I figured he'd babble what we needed to know. I guess he didn't know that we have HOT SPRINGS in these parts. Must've been quite a surprise when he expected cool water to go down his murderin' throat!"

"POPSICLE" KIDS SAVE THE DAY

TESS AND TIM SOLVE A
BIG GIFT PROBLEM

WOW! WE ALMOST
FORGOT MOM AND
POPS WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY!

IT'S NEXT WEEK AND
I DON'T HAVE MUCH
MONEY FOR
A GIFT!

I GOT IT! WE'LL
USE THE "POPSICLE"
GIANT GIFT LIST!

TERRIFIC
IDEA!

HERE'S A BEAUTIFUL
PLASTIC APRON FOR
MOM... A HUNTING
KNIFE FOR DAD!

I'LL
COUNT
OUR
BAGS!

THE BIG DAY

MY, WHAT
A LOVELY
APRON!

AND LOOK AT
THIS SWELL
HUNTING
KNIFE!

YOU SAID IT!
AND THESE
"POPSICLE"
GIFTS ARE
SWELL PRE-
SENTS FOR
ANY OCCASION,
FOR ANYONE,
TOO!

GET SWELL GIFTS... SAVE BAGS WITH POLKA DOTS!

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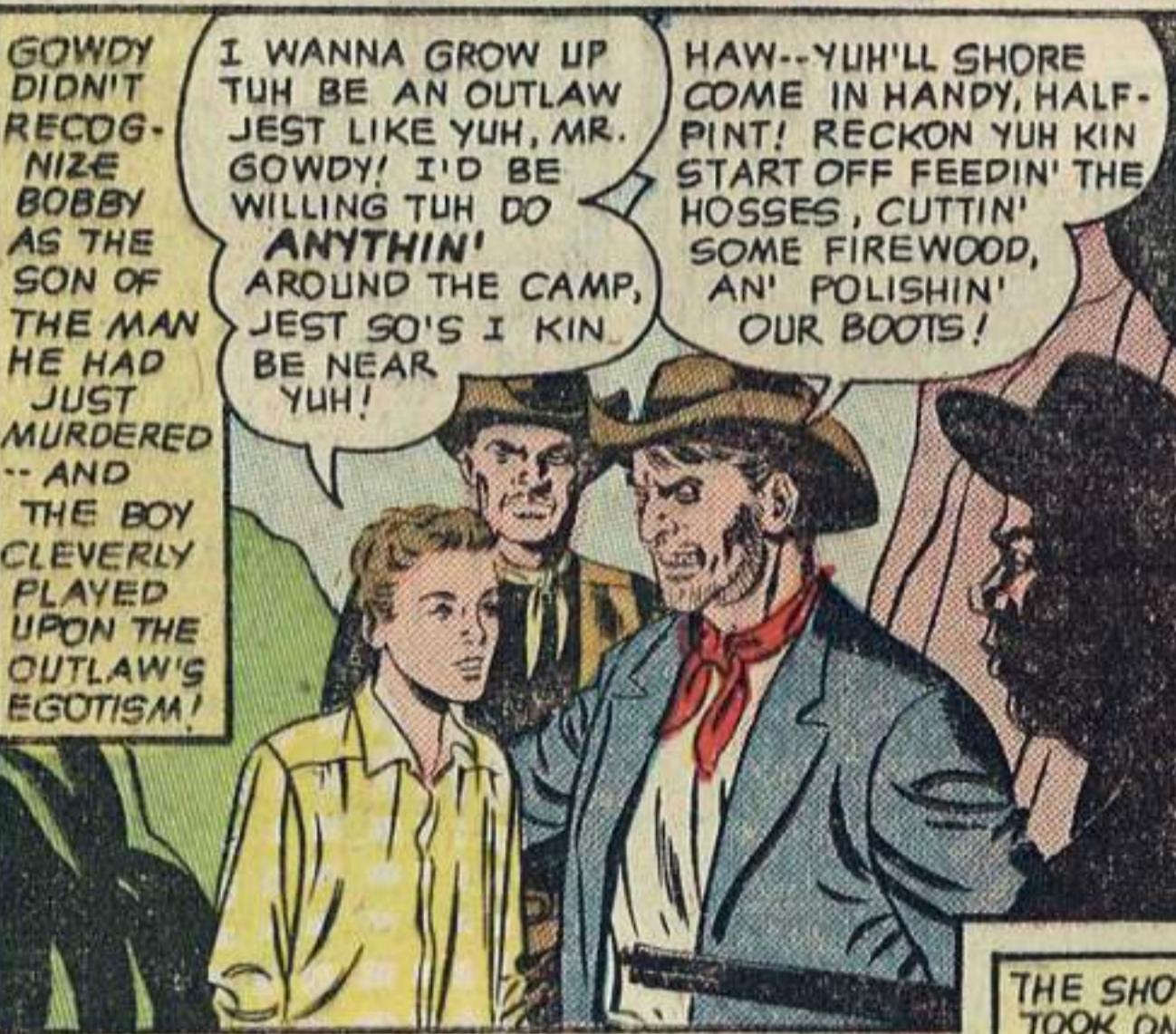
UNSUNG WESTERN HEROES

- BOBBY CURTIS -

IN 1857, TWELVE YEAR OLD BOBBY CURTIS WAS A WITNESS TO A HORRIBLE SCENE! WITHOUT WARNING OUTLAW MATT GOWDY SHOT DOWN HIS FATHER, JUDGE CURTIS OF MOHAWK, ARIZONA...



GOWDY ESCAPED TO HIS GANG HIDEOUT IN THE MOHAWK MOUNTAINS -- AND THERE WASN'T A TOWNSMAN WHO DARED TO PURSUE HIM THERE, BECAUSE THE OUTLAWS COULD HOLD OFF AN ARMY FROM THEIR STRATEGIC POSITIONS OVERLOOKING THE ONLY TRAIL LEADING TO THE HIDEOUT! BUT THERE WAS ONE INDIVIDUAL BRAVE ENOUGH TO ENTER THE OUTLAW'S LAIR!



THE SHOT AWAKENED THE OTHER THREE GANGMEN, WHO TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE UNWAVERING GUN LEVELED AT THEM-- AND DECIDED NOT TO RESIST THE GRIM YOUTH WHO HAD KILLED ONE OF THE WEST'S MOST NOTORIOUS OUTLAWS!



The END

INJUN JONES

I CERTAINLY HOPE YOU'RE NOT SLATED FOR MORE TROUBLE, INJUN -- NOW THAT **ROCKY MANTON** AND HIS GANG ARE BACK IN TOWN!

SHORE WISH I KNEW WHAT MANTON AN' HIS PARDS WERE UP TUH DURIN' THE MONTH THEY WERE AWAY-- SOMEWHAH UP NORTH, ACCORDIN' TUH MUH APACHE SCOUTS! BUT I MADE UP MUH MIND TUH KEEP MUH EYE ON MANTON SINCE THEY RETURNED FIVE DAYS AGO -- AN' THAT'S WHY WE'RE TRAILIN' THOSE BUZZARDS NOW!

THERE WAS ONE WORD, RELAYED ALONG THE LENGTH OF A CREAKING WAGON TRAIN, THAT COULD BRING A STAB OF FEAR TO THE TOUGHEST MULE SKINNER OUT OF SANTA FE -- **CHEYENNE!** THIS WAS THE TRIBE THAT SWEEPED SOUTH FROM THE COLORADO PLAINS WITH RED-TIPPED LANCES AND A HUNGER FOR SCALPS -- UNTIL **INJUN JONES** GAVE THEM A TASTE OF APACHE FURY AT THE BATTLE OF PINTO CANYON!



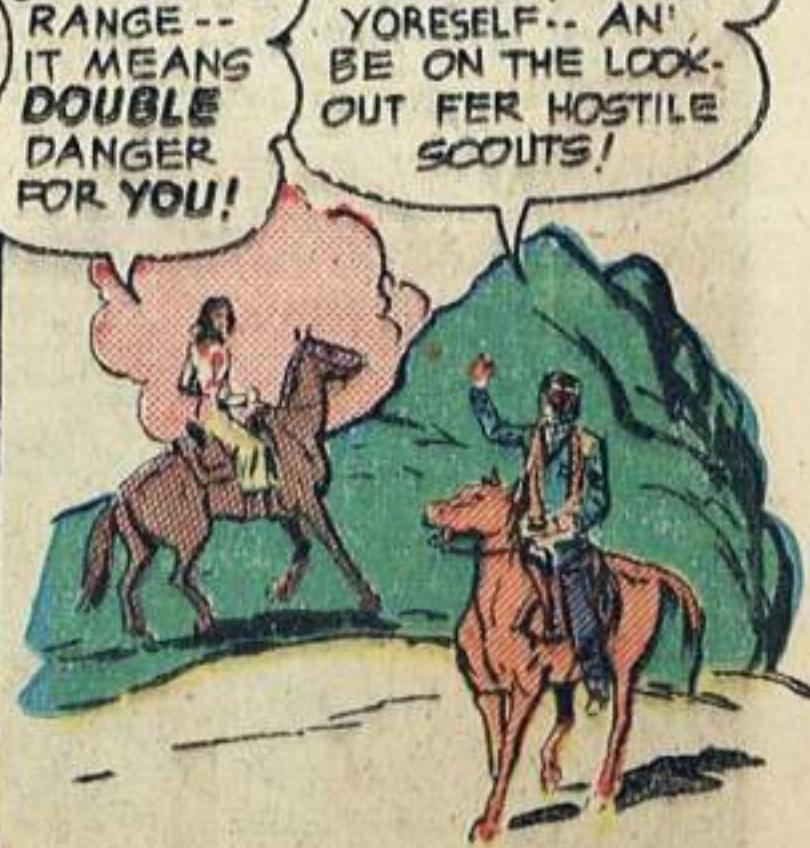
CRIMPIN' COYOTES, VICKIE! LOOK THAR -- AN' TELL ME WHAT YUH SEE!

HOOF PRINTS! BUT THAT CAN'T BE THE MANTON GANG, INJUN -- THERE MUST BE AT LEAST A HUNDRED RIDERS!

YEP -- AN' THEM UNSHOD PONIES MEAN JEST ONE THING -- **A RED-SKIN WAR PARTY!** I'M NOT SHORE THEY AIM TUH JUMP THE APACHES -- BUT WITH MOST O' RED CLOUD'S BRAVES OUT AFTER BUFFALO -- WE WON'T STAND A CHANCE IF IT COMES TUH A SHOWDOWN! YUH'D BETTER RAISE DUST, GAL, AN' WARN RED CLOUD -- WHILE I TRY TUH GIT AN' IDEE O' WHAT'S BREWIN'!

I DON'T LIKE THIS, INJUN! WITH BOTH THE MANTON GANG AND A STRANGE WAR PARTY OUT ON THE RANGE -- IT MEANS **DOUBLE DANGER** FOR YOU!

WAL, VICKIE -- I'M DOIN' DOUBLE DUT/ AS BOTH A DEPUTY AN' APACHE WAR CHIEF, SO TROUBLE'S BOUND TO BE DOUBLE-BARRELED NOW AN' THEN! WATCH YORESELF -- AN' BE ON THE LOOK-OUT FER HOSTILE SCOUTS!

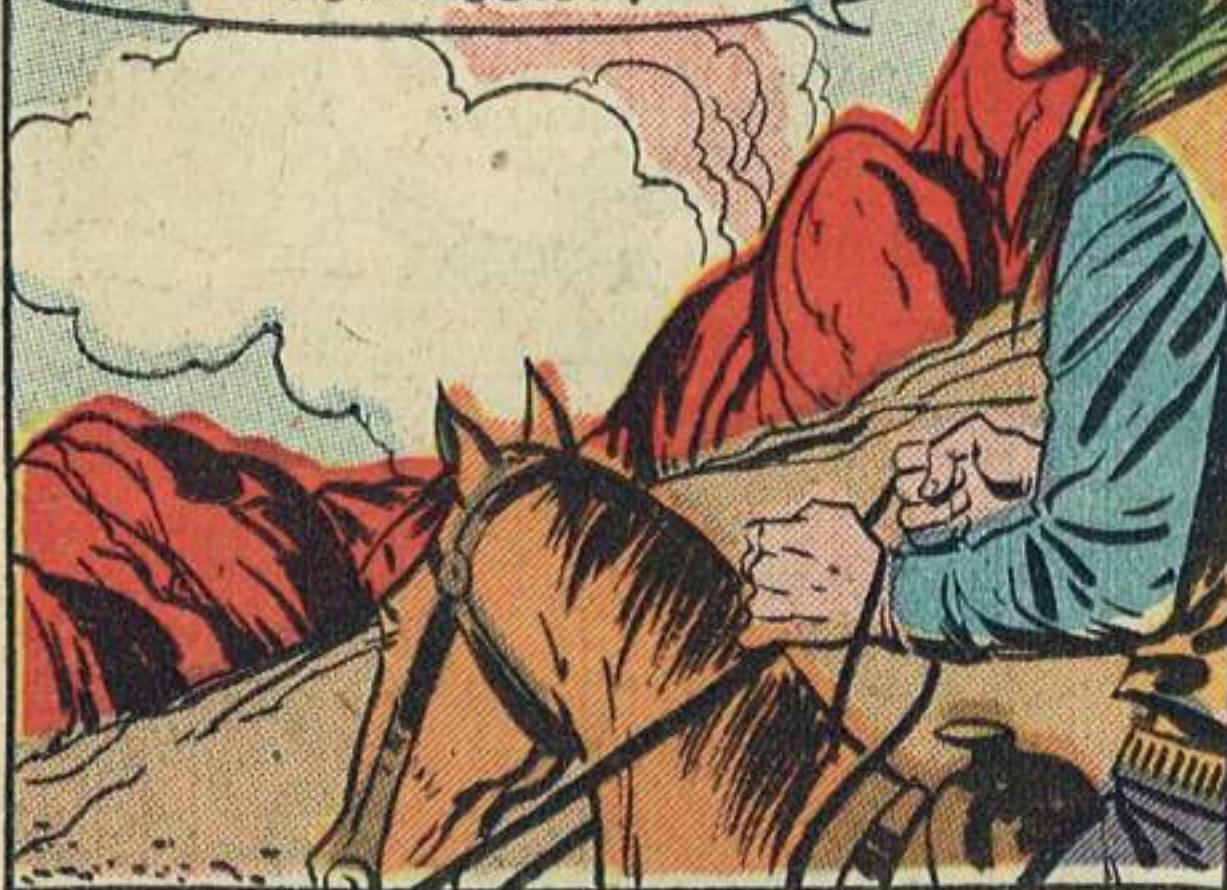


MILES BEYOND-- NEAR GEYSER VALLEY--

HERE'S WHAR THE TWO SETS O' TRACKS MEET-- INDIAN PONIES.. AN' THE SHOD HORSES RIDDEN BY THE GANG! IT'S NO ACCIDENT, IN OPEN COUNTRY LIKE THIS.. THE BRAVES AN' THE OUTLAWS ARE HEADIN' TOWARD A PRE-ARRANGED MEETIN' PLACE .. DOWN BELOW!

AS INJUN STALKS FORWARD...

SUFFERIN' SASSAFRAS-- IT'S A BAND OF PAINTED CHEYENNE! THEY'RE SPOILIN' FER A RUCKUS, SHORE ENOUGH-- AND WHAT'S MORE, THEY'RE IN CAHOOTS WITH ROCKY MANTON!



YEP, THIS SACRED WOLF PAW'S BEEN BIG MEDICINE TUH THE CHEYENNE FER HUNDREDS O' Y'ARS-- AN' JEST LIKE I TOLD YUH-- STEALIN' IT WAS A SHORE-FIRE WAY O' GITTIN' EM ON THE WARPATH!

WE RISKED OUR NECKS GITTIN' INTUH THE CHEYENNE CAMP, ROCKY -- BUT THEY DON'T SUSPECT US-- NOT AFTER WE SCATTERED A MOC-CASIN AN' OTHER TRADIN' POST JUNK NEAR THE TEPEES-- JEST AS IF THEY'D BEEN LOST ACCIDENTAL-LIKE BY AN APACHE RAIDIN' PARTY!

WE'VE TRICKED THE CHEYENNE INTUH LEAVIN' THEIR RESERVATION TUH TAKE REVENGE ON THE APACHES-- AN' YUH SAVVY WHAT THAT MEANS! ACCORDIN' TUH LAW, THEY'LL BE SENT TUH OKLAHOMA-- AN' THEIR TRIBAL LAND WILL BE SOLD TUH THE FIRST BIDDER! THAT'S GOIN' TUH BE ME-- AS SOON AS THEM PESKY REDSKINS HAVE STIRRED UP ENOUGH OF A RUCKUS TUH MAKE THE GOVERNMENT STEP IN!



THERE IS A PART OF INJUN JONES THAT HAS NEVER BEEN TAMED-- AND IT FLARES UP NOW!

MANTON, I'M THE ONE WHO'S STEPPIN' IN--

-- AN' THAT MEANS THE LAW!

TAKE COVER-- THAT'S INJUN JONES!

IN THE NEXT SECOND-- WITH A FLASHING DOUBLE-DRAW--



JHEN-- ROUSING QUICKLY AS A NEST OF RATTLES--

EE-YAH!
WHO IS
THIS
INJUN
JONES?

A TRUSTED BLOOD BROTHER OF THE
HATED APACHES! AND WHEN HE
MEETS A CHIEF OF THE CHEYENNE--
HE MEETS DEATH!

AN INSTANT TOO LATE-- INJUN SIDESTERS
THE HISSING BLADE--



INJUN JONES NO GET
PLUGGED, MANTON..

NO GET CARVED UP!
HIM PALEFACE WHO
LIVE LIKE INDIAN--
NOW HIM DIE
LIKE INDIAN --

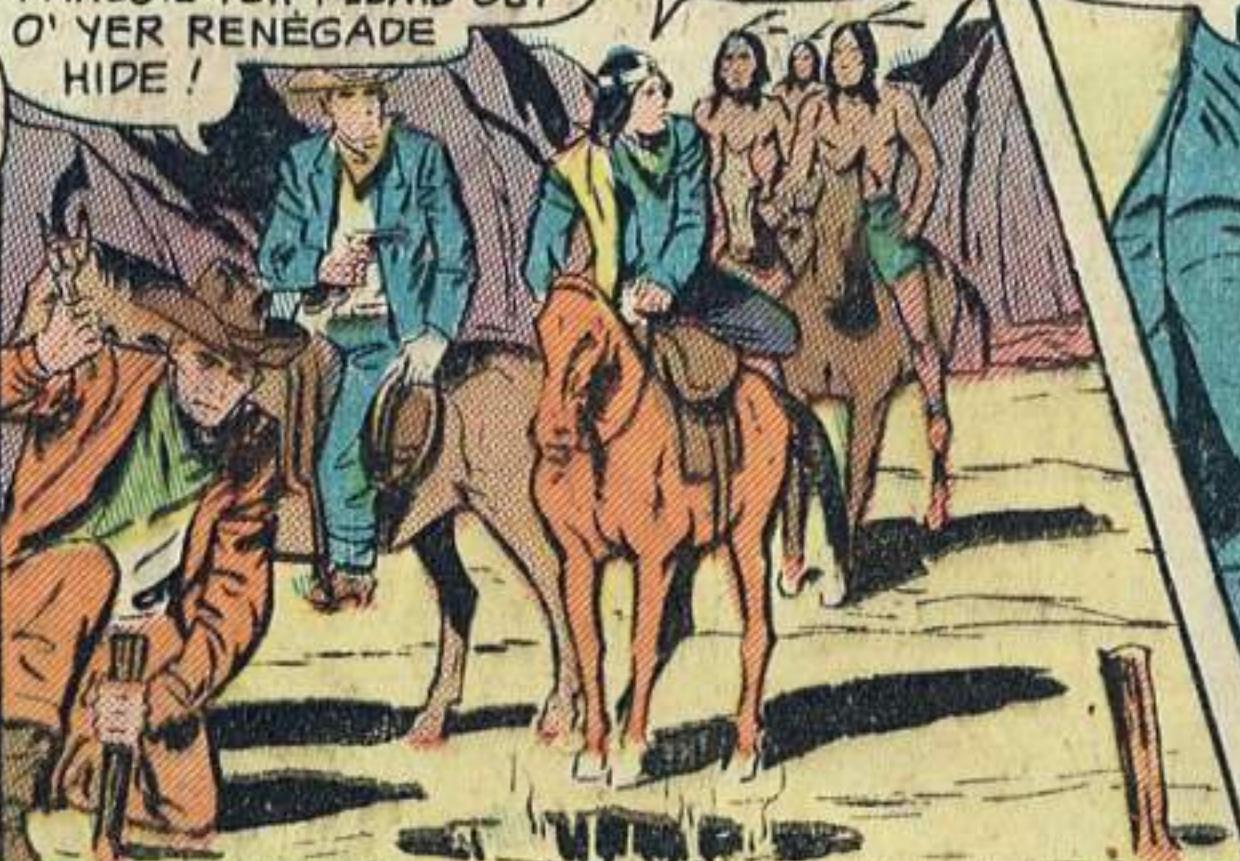
YUH'VE GOT
A JIM-DANDY
IDEE THAR,
CHIEF-- AN' I
KNOW JEST
THE METHOD!
GIT HIM ON A
HOSS.. WE'RE
HEADIN' FER
BUBBLIN'
GEYSER!

SOON AFTERWARD--

CLIMB DOWN, HOMBRE!
WE'RE STAKIN' YUH OUT
OVER THAT GEYSER HOLE
-- AN' LETTIN' THE STEAM
PARBOIL YUH PLUMB OUT
O' YER RENEGADE
HIDE!

YUH CHEYENNE ARE
GITTIN' TRICKED
FER FAIR! IF
YUH WANT YORE
SACRED WOLF
PAW-- IT'S--

TOO BAD YUH DIDN'T
PALAVER SOONER, INJUN
JONES-- BECAUSE
THAT'S THE KIND O'
SECRET GALOOTS LIKE
YUH DIE WITH!



MINUTES LATER-- EVEN IF HE'S
TOUGH ENOUGH
MEBBE INJUN TUH STAND THAT
SQUIRMED
BEFORE,
MANTON--
BUT HE
SHORE
WILL
NOW!

ERUPT IN A HALF-HOUR!
THAT BOILIN' JET WILL
RIP INJUN JONES APART
-- AN' BLAST WHAT'S
LEFT O' HIS CARCASS
A MILE HIGH!

WITH THE STEAM SEETHING
AROUND INJUN'S BODY--

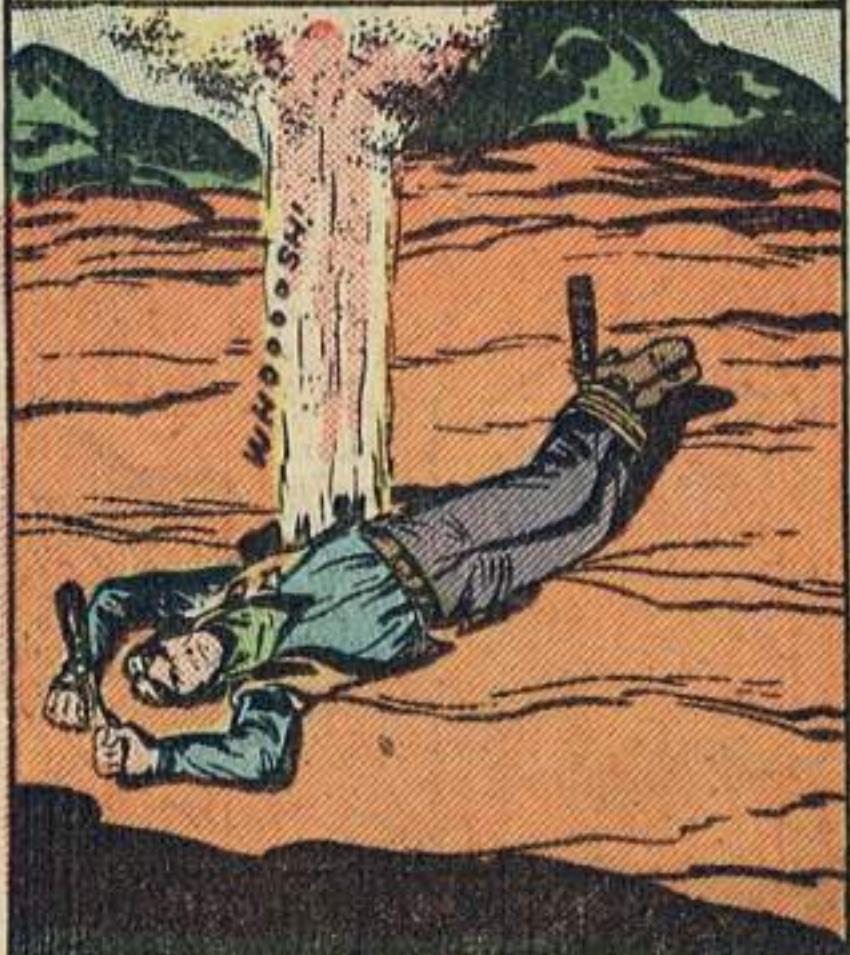
CRIMPIN' COYOTES-- I'VE
LIVED THROUGH JEST ABOUT
EVERY REDSKIN TORTURE IN
THE BOOKS-- BUT THIS
IS PLUMB MORE'N
I KIN TAKE!

BUT INJUN JONES WAS TRAINED BY
THE APACHES TO BEAR PAIN AS
PROUDLY AS HE BEARS HIS
WEAPONS-- AND NOW-- WITH
GRIM DETERMINATION--

STRUGGLIN' WON'T HELP! I'VE
GOT TUH FERGIT THE TORTURE
ANI' JEST LAY HERE-- AN'
KEEP THE STEAM FROM
ESCAPIN' FER
A SPELL!



JHEN, AT GRUELING TWO-MINUTE INTERVALS, INJUN MOVES-- JUST ENOUGH TO SEND A SPOUT OF RENT-UP STEAM HISSING SKYWARD--



THREE MILES AWAY-- AT THE APACHE CAMP--

I HOPE YOU'VE SPOTTED THAT WAR PARTY, RED CLOUD! STEAM COME FROM BUBBLING GEYSER HEAP STRANGE! RED CLOUD NEVER SEE 'EM THIS BEFORE -- PUFFS CLIMBING IN SKY-- LIKE SMOKE SIGNAL!



RED CLOUD-- YOU NO READ 'EM? IS PLENTY SIGNAL-- THE DANGER WARNING!

APACHES-- GET HORSES! WE RIDE TO BUBBLING GEYSER!



MINUTES LATER--

GOOD HEAVENS-- INJUN!

WAIT! PRETTY QUICK-- GEYSER SHOOT UP BOILING WATER!



YAHOOOO! STAND BACK, APACHES! IF ONE OF US MUST DIE FOR INJUN JONES-- HE IS WORTHY OF A CHIEF!



WITHOUT CHECKING HIS PLUNGING CAYUSE, RED CLOUD SWINGS TOWARD THE QUAKING GROUND!

NEVER MIND ME, PARDNER-- SHE'S READY TUH RIP!



JHEN-- IN A ROARING JET--



OH, INJUN, I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER LIVED THROUGH A MORE HORRIBLE MOMENT!

THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME YUH'VE SAVED MUH LIFE, RED CLOUD-- BUT I'D A HEAP RUTHER DIED THAN LEFT THE CAMP UNGUARDED! ROCKY MANTON'S ON HIS WAY WITH A BAND O SCALP-HUNGRY CHEYENNES-- AN' UNLESS WE MOVE PRONTO-- WE WON'T FIND AN APACHE SQUAW LEFT ALIVE!



FOR THE FIRST TIME, RED CLOUD STUDIES THE GROUND-- HIS TRAINED EYES SEEING PERIL IN A SINGLE GLANCE--

PLENTY CHEYENNE-- APACHES OUTNUMBERED BAD! BUT WHAT IS A BATTLE TO US, INJUN JONES-- IF IT DOES NOT HOLD THE POSSIBILITY OF A BRAVE DEATH?

ME-- I'M RARIN' TUH TANGLE WITH ROCKY MANTON AN' HIS CHEYENNE PARDS-- BUT WHY LET 'EM KNOW WE'RE JEST A HANDFUL? THAR'S A BUZZARD SKELETON YONDER-- AN' IT'S JEST WHAT WE NEED TUH SET A TRAP!

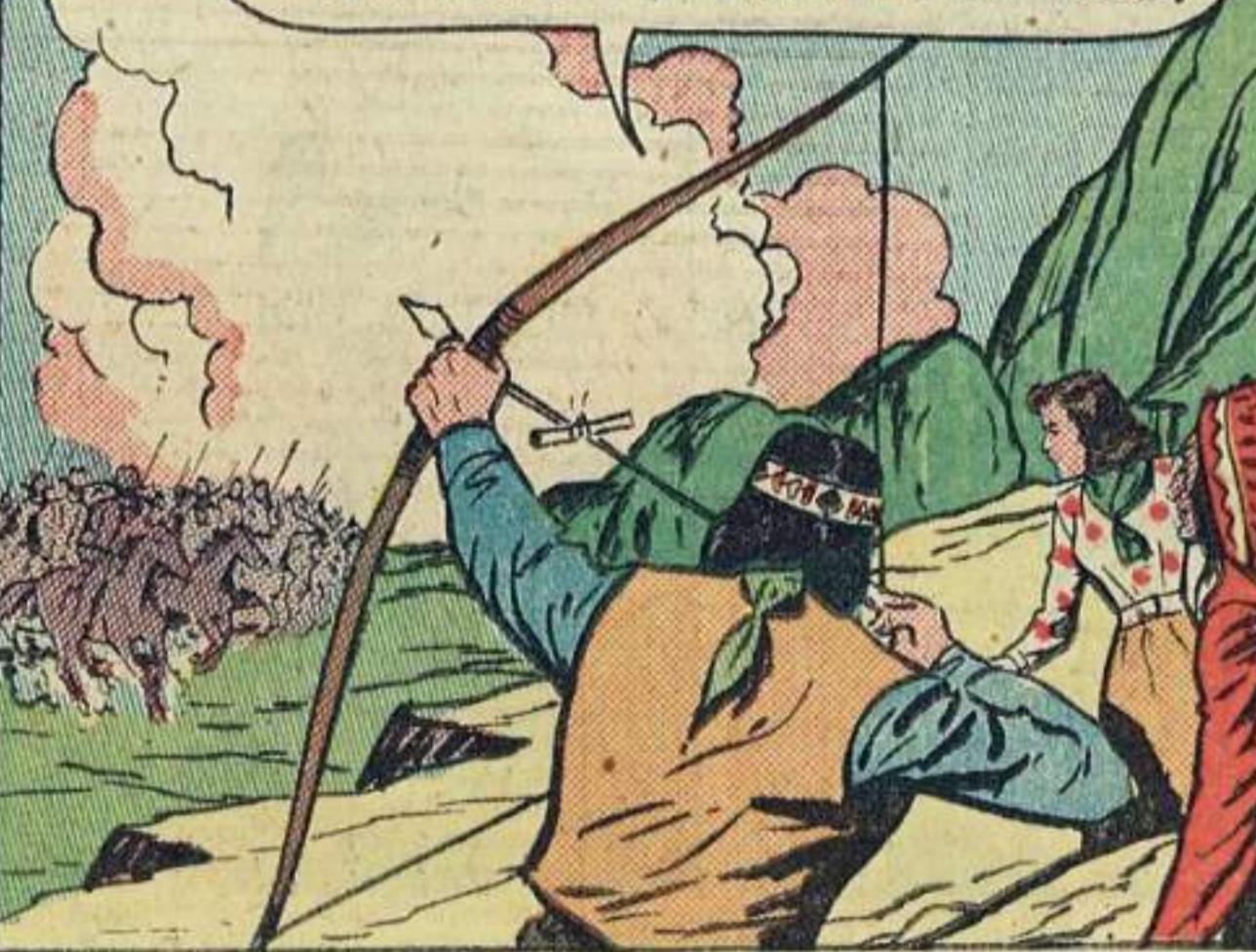
THEN-- WITH A FEW INCHES OF THREAD RIPPED FROM INJUN'S SHIRT--

WE'LL MAKE A COUPLE MORE O' THESE TRICK ARROWS! WHEN THEY'RE SHOT INTUH THE AIR, THIS PIECE O' HOLLOW LEG-BONE MAKES A HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLE-- EXACTLY LIKE THE APACHE WAR SIGNAL!



MINUTES LATER--

THAR THEY COME! THEY DON'T SAVVY THAR'S AN APACHE BRAVE BEHIND 'EM-- AN' ONE ON THEIR OTHER FLANK! WHEN THE THREE ARROWS WHISTLE OVERHEAD FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS-- ROCKY MANTON'S DUE FER A SURPRISE!



SUDDENLY-- ECHOING LIKE AN OMINOUS CHORUS--

PLENTY APACHES, MANTON-- SOUNDS LIKE 'EM ALL AROUND US!

IT'S A THREE-PRONGED ATTACK-- AN' THAT MEANS THE WHOLE ORNERY APACHE NATION'S OUT ON THE PROD! THAR'S ONLY ONE WAY OPEN-- DIG IN YORE SPURS FER PINTO CANYON!



TO THE ONRUSHING RIDERS, PINTO CANYON MIGHT SEEM A HAVEN-- BUT CROUCHING ON THE CRAGGY WALLS--



TO THE ONRUSHING RIDERS,

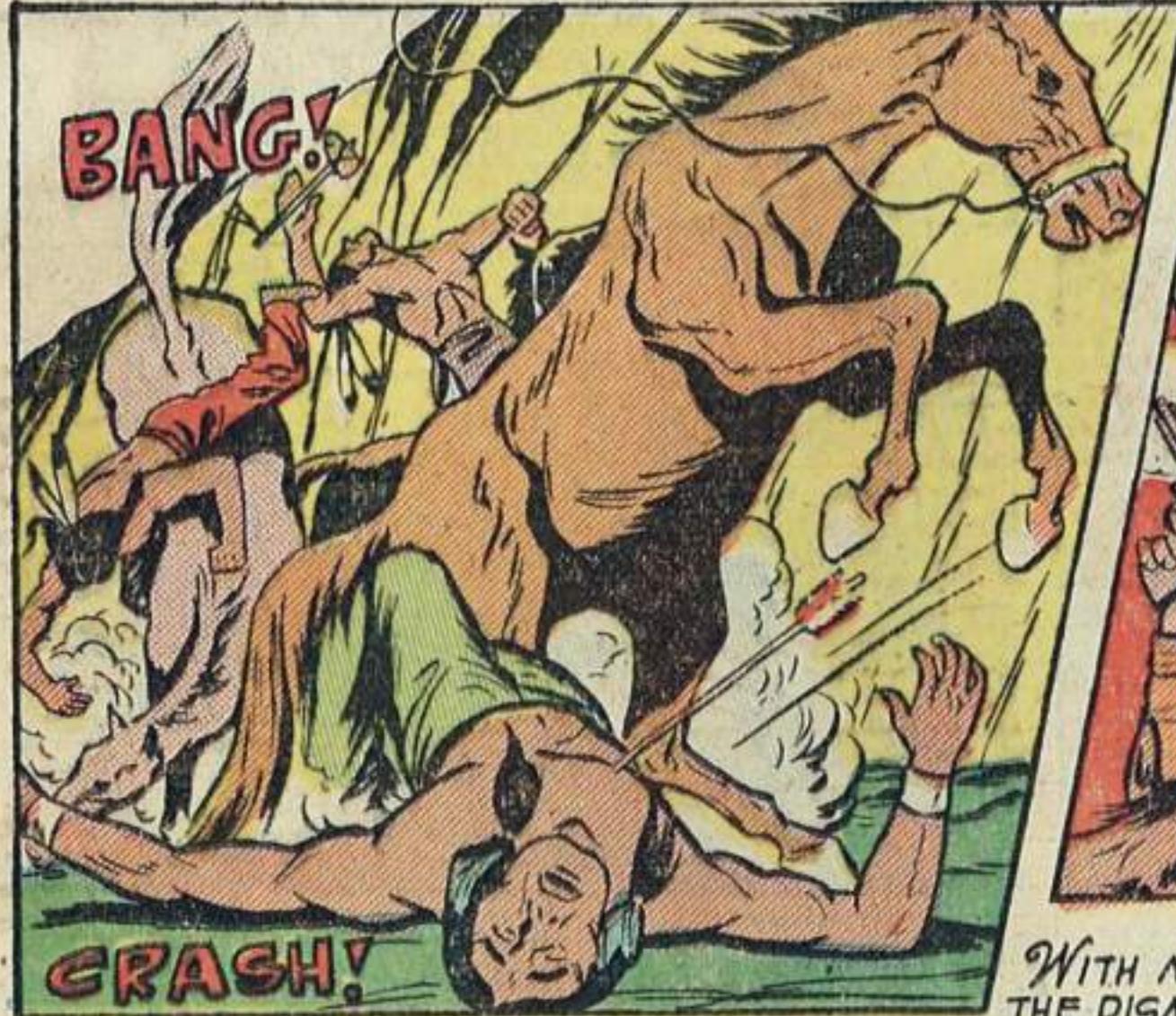
PINTO CANYON MIGHT SEEM A HAVEN-- BUT CROUCHING ON THE CRAGGY WALLS--

PEERING FROM THE LOFTY LEDGES--

REMEMBER-- SPACE YORE SHOTS! IF WE CAN'T MAKE THIS LOOK LIKE A MASS ATTACK-- WE'RE THE ONES WHO'LL BE TRAPPED!



'IN THE FIRST VOLLEY OF THUNDERING SHOTS AND HISSING ARROWS-- A DOZEN RIDERS PITCH FROM THEIR JOSTLING MOUNTS--



AS THE CHEYENNE TURN THEIR HORSES-- DEMORALIZED BY THE HIDDEN FOE--

SEEMS PURTY STRANGE YUH'RE PLUMB RIGHT-- TUH ME, MANTON! IF THAR CAN'T BE MORE'N A HANDFUL O' BRAVES UP THAR! WE'VE BEEN TRICKED -- AN' I'M FIXIN' TUH TURN THE TABLES!



With MANTON LEADING THE DISMOUNTED CHARGE--

TEN OF YUH KIN BLOCK BOTH ENDS O' THE CANYON! WE'LL CHARGE BOTH SLOPES IN FORCE -- AN' IT'S A SHORE BET THAT INJUN JONES AN' HIS APACHE PARDS WON'T KEEP THEIR HAIR MORE'N AN HOUR!



THAR'S ONLY ONE THING THAT'LL SAVE US, RED CLOUD! I'VE GOT TUH RIDE UP TUH PULPIT LEDGE-- UP ON THE CANYON RIM!

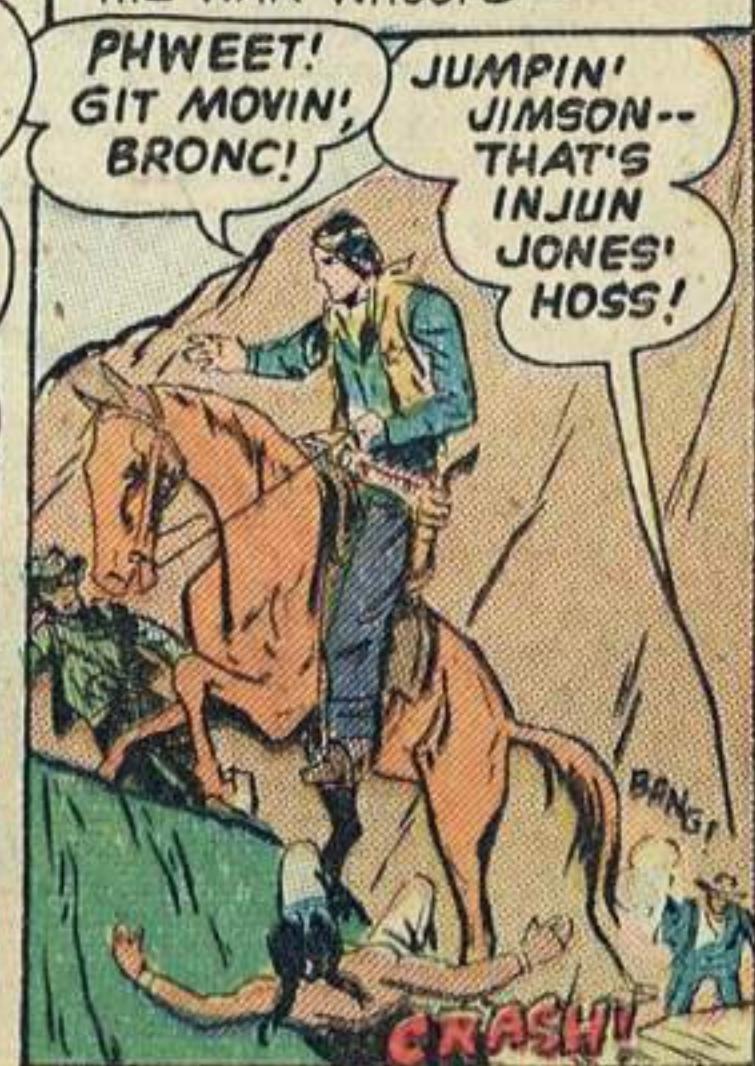
MEBBE MOUNTAIN GOAT GET UP THERE -- BUT NEVER HORSE AND RIDER! AND EVEN IF YOU REACH PULPIT LEDGE, ROCK IS PLENTY CRACKED! ROCK WILL GIVE WAY, INJUN JONES -- AND PLUNGE YOU HUNDRED FEET INTO CANYON!



JHEN, AS AN UNMISTAKABLE WHISTLE SHRILLS ABOVE THE WAR WHOOPS--

PHWEET!
GIT MOVIN',
BRONC!

JUMPIN'
JIMSON--
THAT'S
INJUN
JONES'
HOSS!

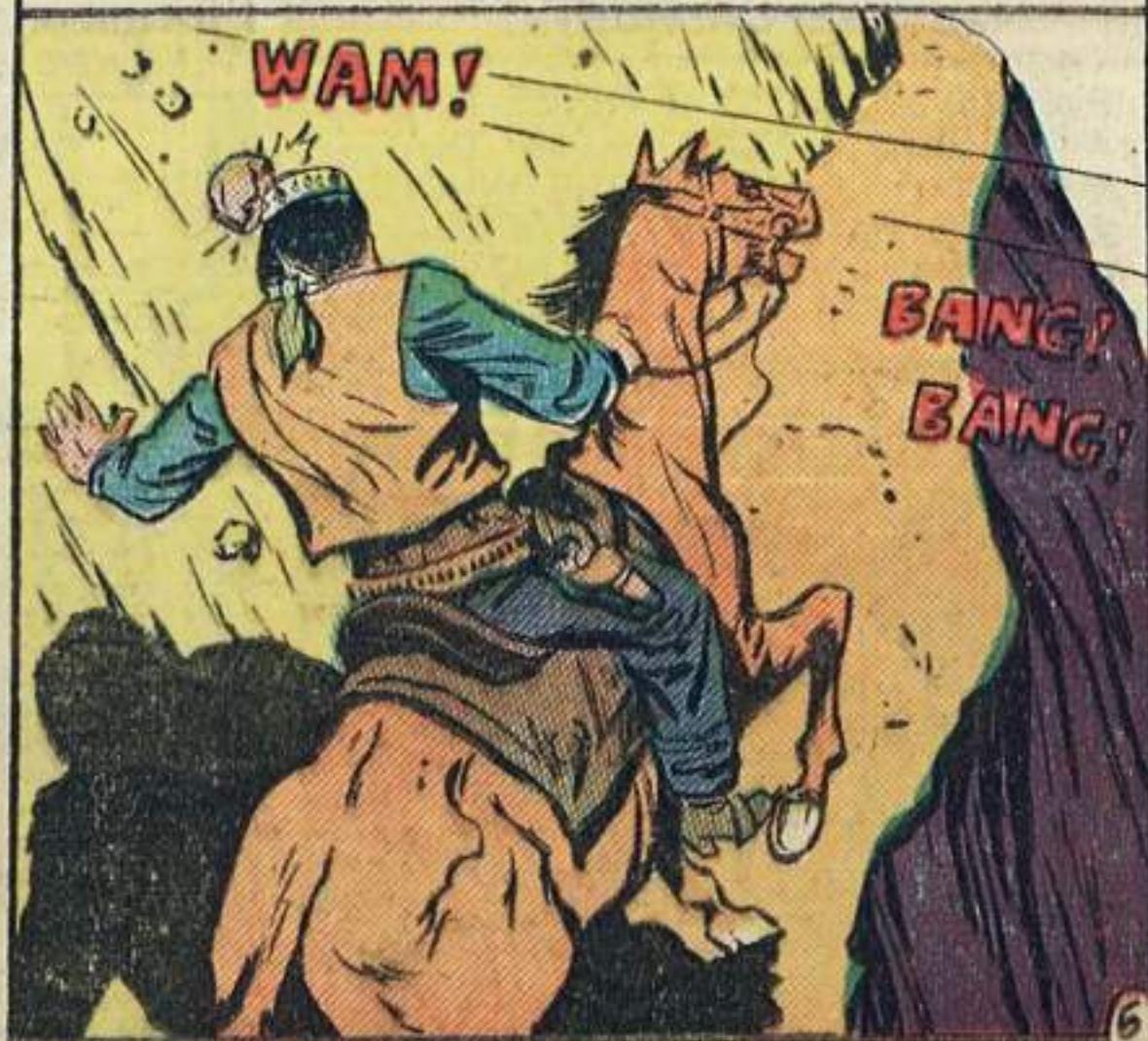


A MOMENT LATER--

HE'S RIDIN' UP!
CONCENTRATE YORE FIRE, YUH JUGHEADS --
PICK HIM OFF!



WITH A BLISTERING VOLLEY RATTLING FROM ALL SIDES--



KEEP GOIN', BRONC--THIS'LL
KEEP THEIR HEADS DOWN
FER A SPELL!

WITH THE COURAGE OF A TRUE
APACHE PONY--CONFIDENT OF
THE SKILL OF ITS RIDER--

FINALLY, HIGH ABOVE THE CANYON
FLOOR--



MANTON AN' HIS
HOWLIN' CHEYENNE
ARE WITHIN' A FEW
YARDS O' THE APACHES
-- THEY'LL BE
OVERRUN PRONTO!



AN INSTANT LATER--

YAHOOOO!
CHEYENNE
LIFT
APACHE
HAIR!

CRIMPIN' COYOTES,
MANTON--WATCH
OUT!



WOA UP, BRONC--
RECKON I KIN
HANDLE THE REST
O' THE
LIFTIN'!

HEAVENS,
RED CLOUD
-- WHAT'S
THAT?

POW
SOK
THE LEDGE!
I WARN INJUN
JONES -- ROCK IS
CRUMBLING --
READY
TO FALL!



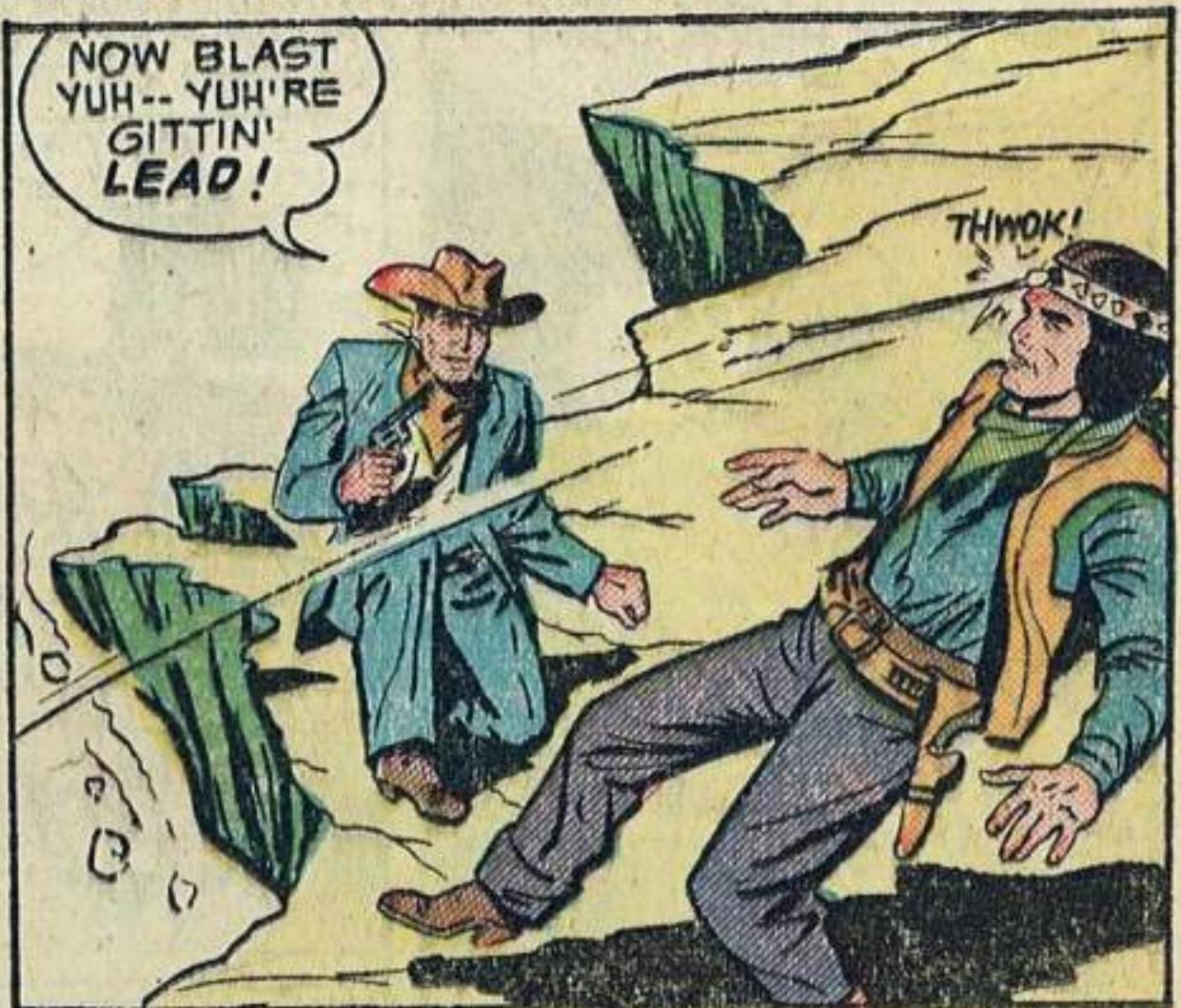
THE ENTIRE LEDGE
WILL GIVE WAY ANY
SECOND-- AND
INJUN'S TOO BUSY
WITH MANTON
TO NOTICE!

QUICK-- GIVE ME THE
BLUNT-HEADED ARROW
WE USE FOR SMALL
GAME!

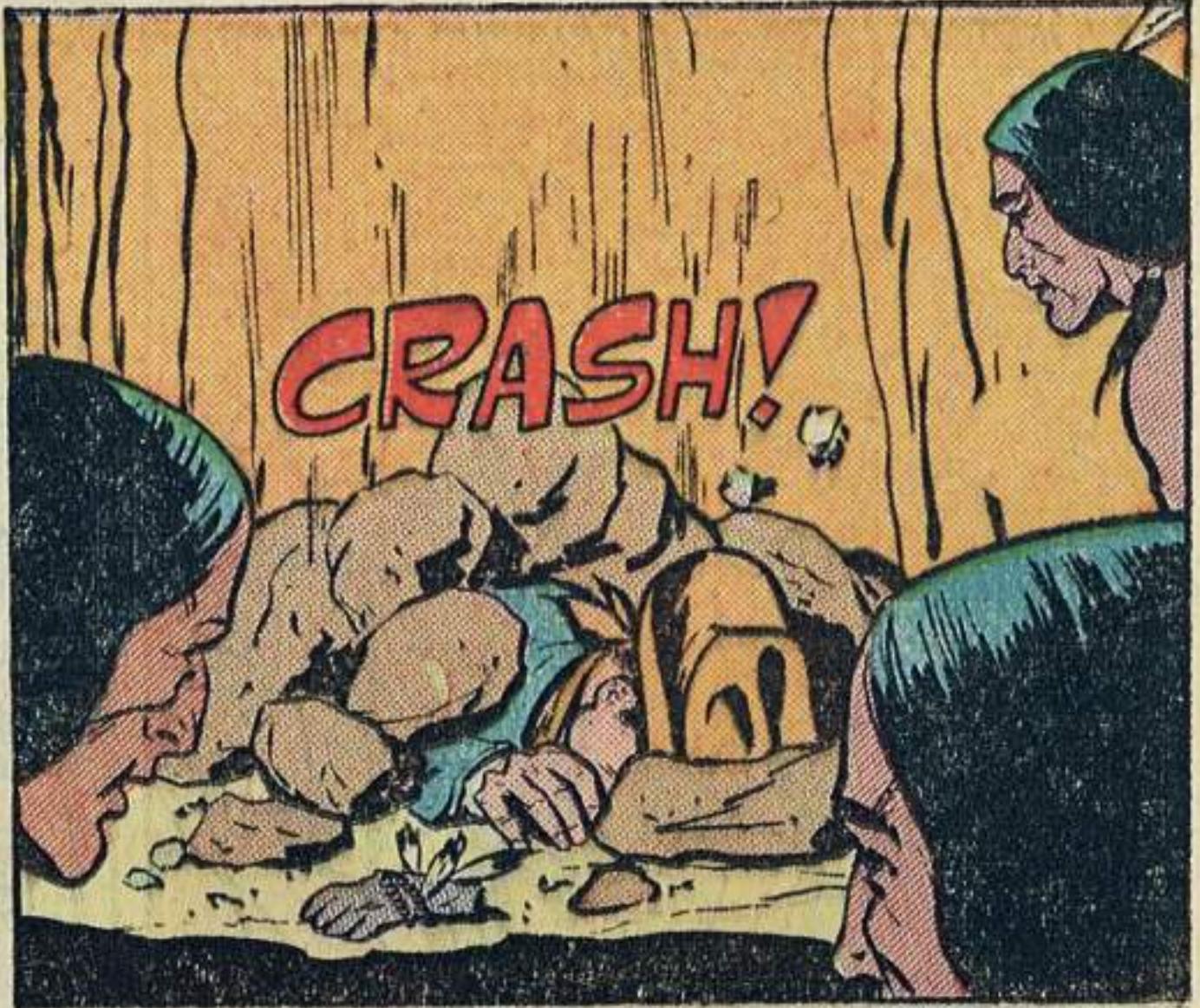
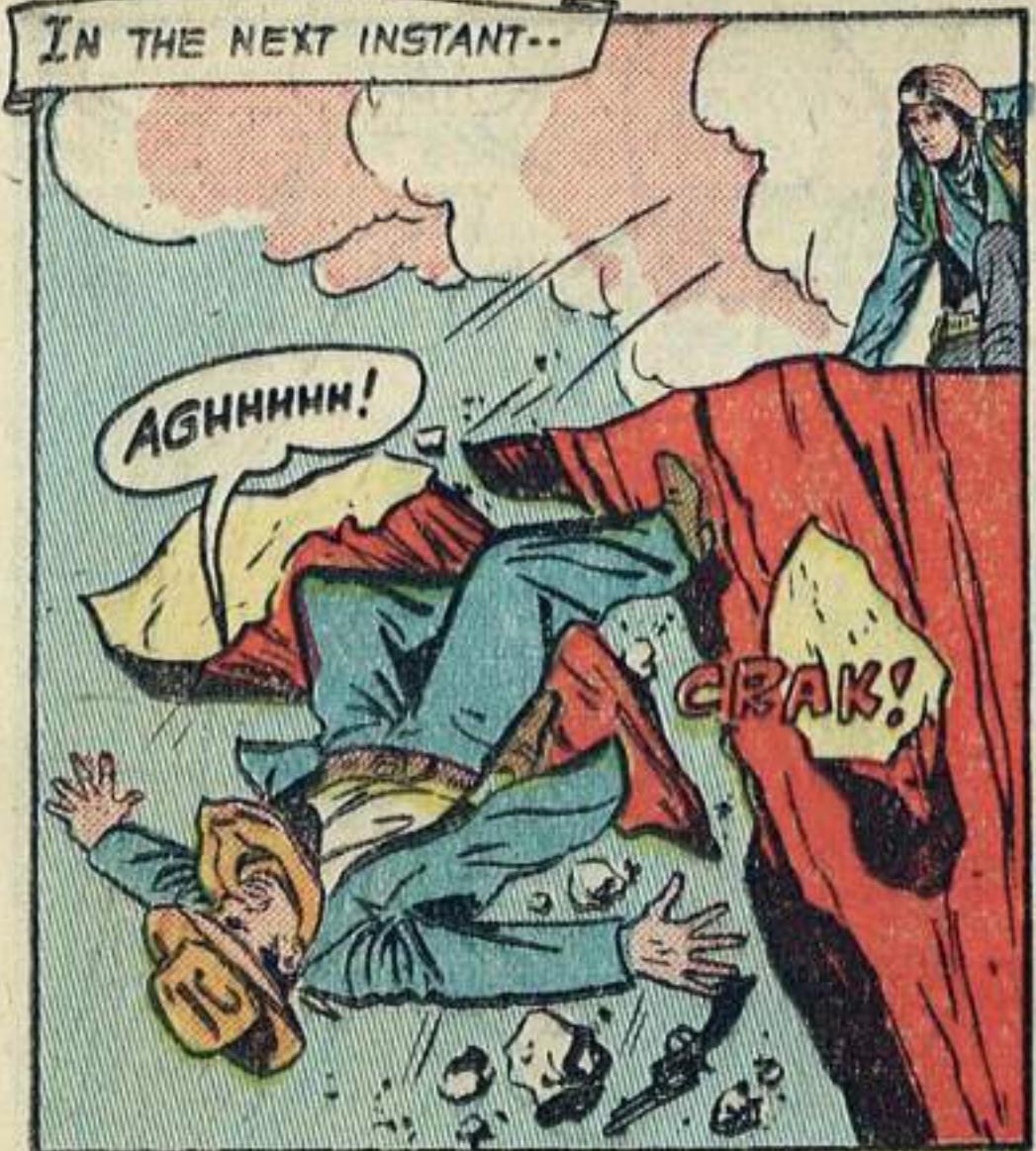
CAREFULLY, RED CLOUD AIMS HIS POWERFUL WAR BOW--
AND AS THE ARROW WHIZZES UP--

NOW BLAST
YUH-- YUH'RE
GITTIN'
LEAD!

THWOK!



IN THE NEXT INSTANT--



THE SACRED
WOLF PAW!
MANTON TRICKED
US! IT WAS
IN HIS
POCKET
ALL THE
TIME!

CHEYENNE-- HOLD
YOUR FIRE!
INJUN JONES
HAS PROVED
THE APACHES
ARE NOT OUR
ENEMIES!

AS MANTON'S ACCOMPLICES TRY
TO SNEAK FROM THE CANYON--

EE-YAH! DEATH
TO THE PALEFACE
DOGS-- WHO
TURNED US
AGAINST OUR
FRIENDS!

LATER--

FROM NOW ON-- THERE WILL
BE NO WAR PAINT WHEN
CHEYENNE AND APACHE
MEET! AN' THE NEXT
TIME A LOW-SLUNG
VARMINT LIKE ROCKY
MANTON TRIES TUH
GIT THE FRONTIER
TUH BLAZIN'-- WE'RE
GOIN' TUH SEE THAT
HE GITS HIS COME-
UPPANCE--
TOGETHER!



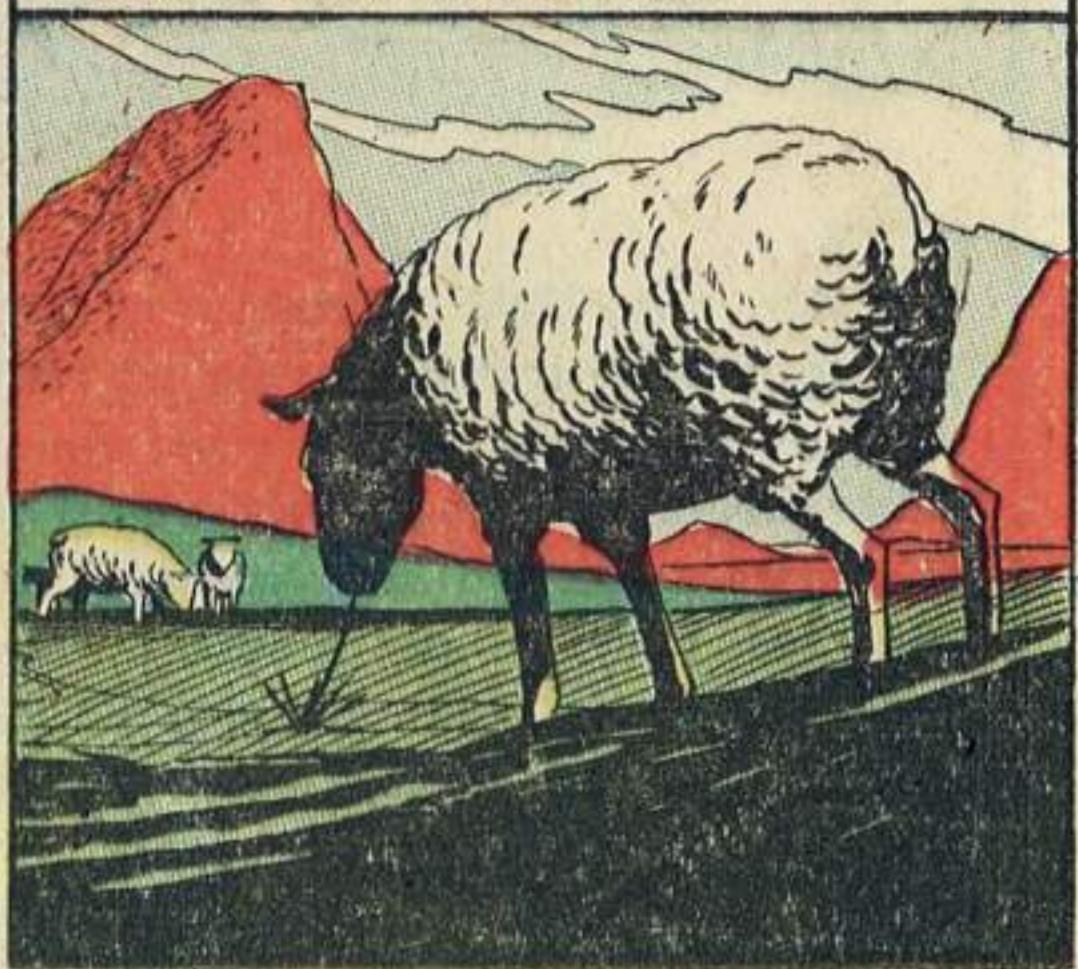
the END

SHEEP WAR

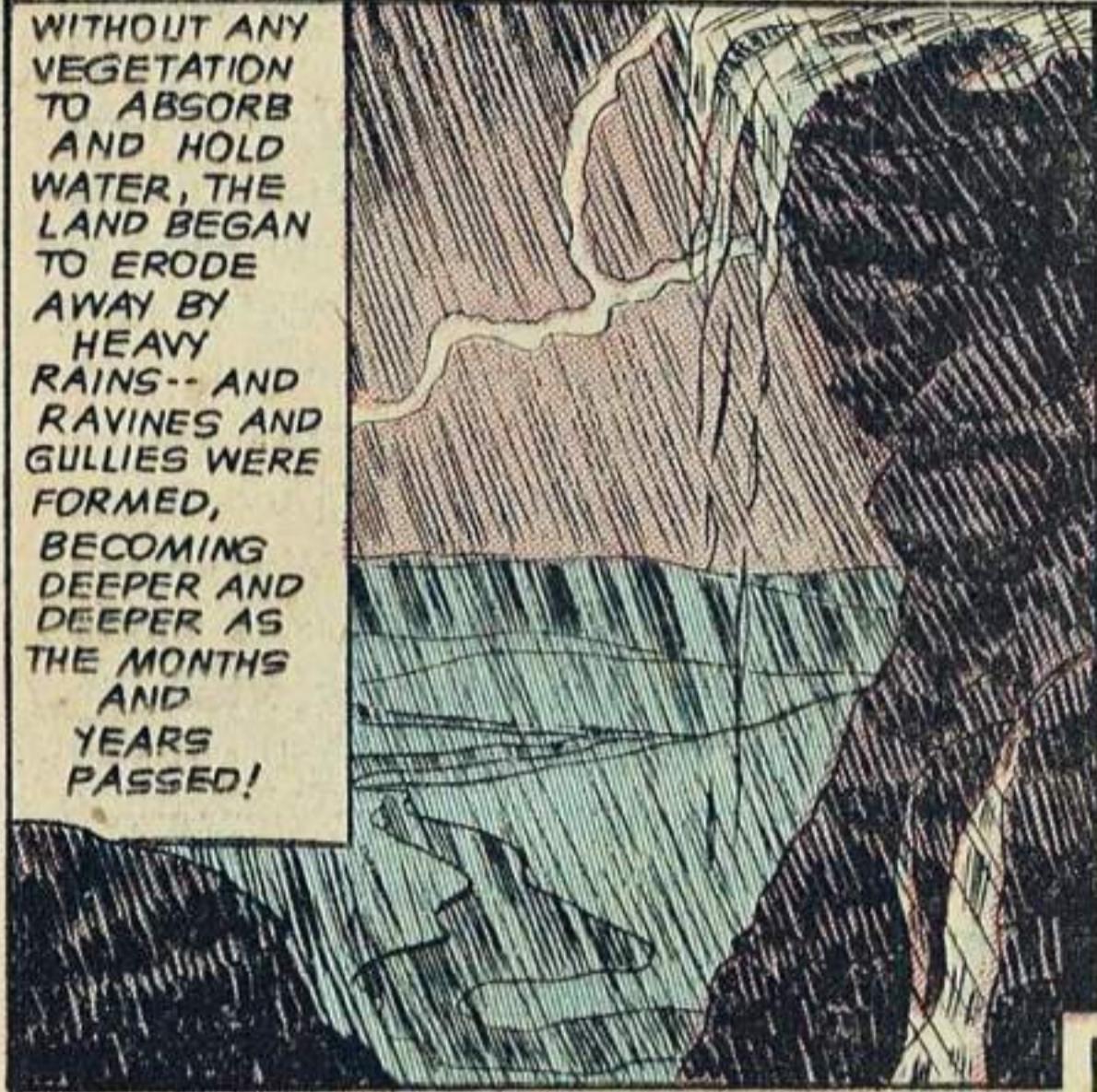
WHEN SHEEP WERE FIRST INTRODUCED ONTO THE WESTERN RANGES IN THE 1800'S, COWBOYS FOUND THEIR CATTLE HERDS STAMPEDED THE MOMENT THEY CAME INTO SCENTING DISTANCE OF THE SHEEP -- AND THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE FAMED RANGE WAR BETWEEN THE CATTLE RANCHERS AND THE SHEEP HERDERS!



WHEREVER THEY GRAZED, SHEEP ATE THE GROUND BARE -- AND LEFT THE LAND WORTHLESS! SHEEP WERE EVEN KNOWN TO EAT A FOREST OF YOUNG TREES IF THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE TO FEED ON!



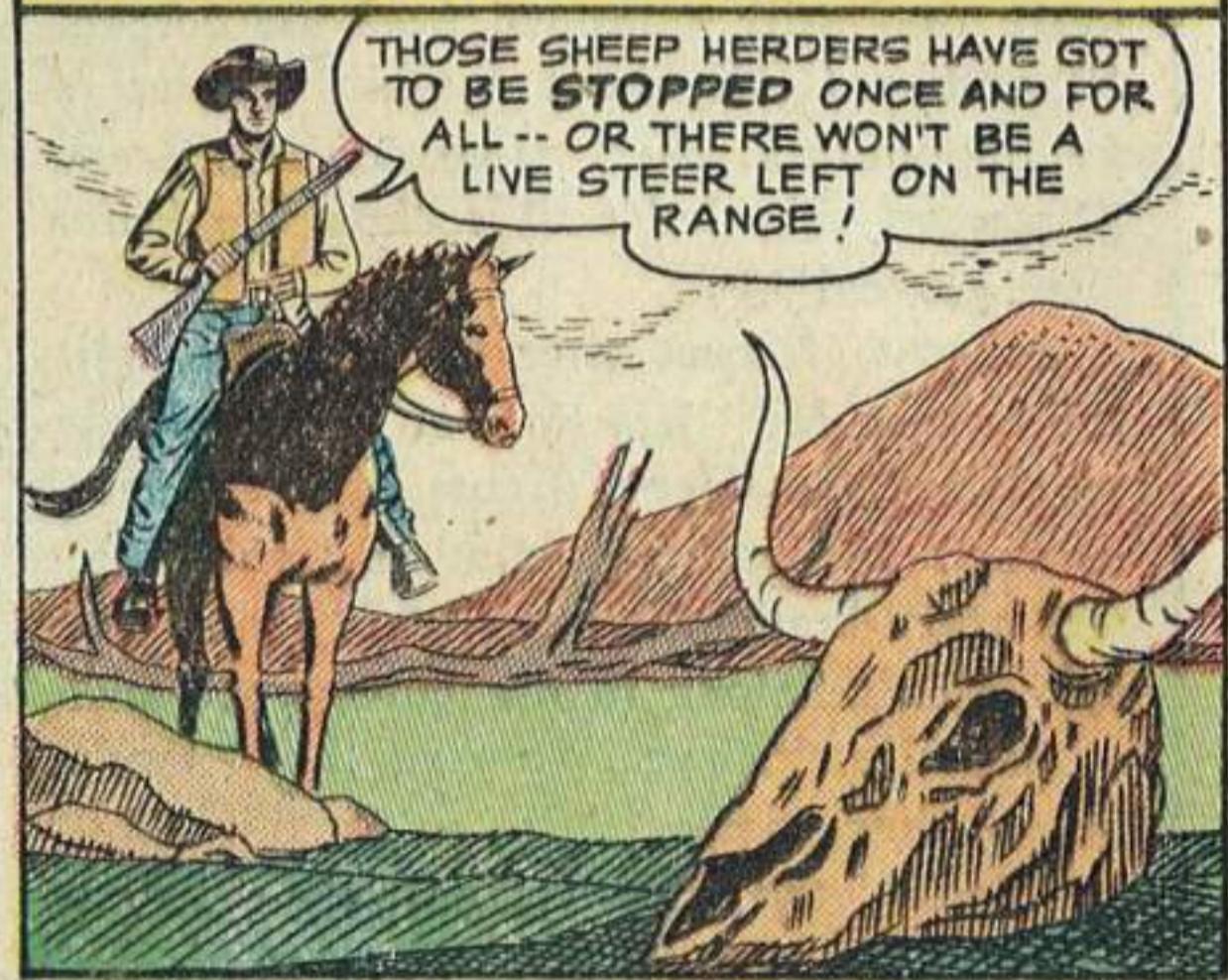
WITHOUT ANY VEGETATION TO ABSORB AND HOLD WATER, THE LAND BEGAN TO ERODE AWAY BY HEAVY RAINS -- AND RAVINES AND GULLIES WERE FORMED, BECOMING DEEPER AND DEEPER AS THE MONTHS AND YEARS PASSED!



AROUSED, THE ANGRY CATTLE RANCHERS AND COWBOYS DREW A "DEAD LINE" -- BEYOND WHICH THEY SAID THE SHEEP HERDERS COULD NOT GO!



SOON, ALL THROUGH THE SOUTHWEST, SCENES LIKE THIS COULD BE SEEN!



MANY BRAVE MEN DIED IN THE ENSUING WARS BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS!



BUT MODERN SCIENCE FINALLY PUT AN END TO THAT WAR! TODAY, THANKS TO IRRIGATION AND SPRINKLER SYSTEMS, THERE IS ENOUGH GRAZING GROUND FOR BOTH SHEEP AND CATTLE -- AND THE MODERN WEST IS A FRIENDLY LAND!

KILLER'S Poison

THE GROWING CROWD of stunned townsfolk stared gravely at Jim Forrest, as he tugged at his gray, straggling mustache. The aging sheriff shrugged his shoulders wearily and pointed to the crumpled body on the ground. "I been peace officer of Oakville nigh on twenty years," he said slowly, "but this is the fust murder I ever come across. Don't rightly know how to go about solvin' it, nohow."

He stooped to examine the hilt of the knife that still protruded from the corpse. "I've heard tell about catchin' murderers by fingerprints, but I shore don't SEE any prints on this knife...I reckon the killer wore gloves!"

A burst of loud, sneering laughter split the autumn air. Jim Forrest turned slowly to survey the dapper figure of a stranger, dressed in loud sportclothes, which immediately branded him as a city man, one who didn't belong in the quiet woodlands of Oakville. "Hmmm," mused Jim. "You're new in these parts, ain't you?"

"Yeah," the stranger smirked. "I blew into this jerkwater burg last night and woulda kept right on goin', except I had engine trouble. And I'll be on my way again just as soon as that hayseed mechanic in this whistle stop gets around to fixin' it!"

Jim Forrest nodded soberly and looked around the little wooded glen which had been the scene of the murder. "Cain't figger out why anybody would want to kill poor Jed Hawkins, unless it was for REVENGE! When Jed come here two years ago, he told me he'd turned state's evidence against some big city racketeer, and sent 'im to that there electricity chair. Guess that's why Jed settled in a small town like Oakville, hopin' that this here racketeer's gang would never find him. But I reckon

they finally did..."

He broke off suddenly and walked swiftly to a thick pile of brush some ten feet from the body. Bending over and examining the clump closely, he said, "Hmmm, this is whar the killer lay in ambush, waitin' fer Jed to pass by on his way home. See whar the poison ivy leaflets are all broken up by someone lyin' on 'em? Wait... POISON IVY!"

Turning swiftly to the deputy sheriff, Jim said, "See that everyone who knew Jed Hawkins doesn't leave town for the next twelve hours...it takes at least that long fer poison ivy to break out, and when it does, we'll KNOW who the killer is!"

The dapper stranger seemed to pale suddenly. Jim said offhandedly, "That means you'll have to postpone your trip too, friend...at least for twelve hours. You're not under suspicion, o' course, but I wanna handle this case like them detectives do in them thar mystery stories. We'll put you up in the town hotel, at the town's expense, so I don't reckon you kin have no complaint."

That night, hiding in the shadows outside the hotel, Jim Forrest watched the sporty stranger trying to sneak out to his car. Swiftly, Jim followed, his jaw firmly set. Just as he was about to collar his victim the stranger whirled, whipping out an ugly, short-snouted pistol. "No yuh don't!" Jim roared, bringing up his gnarled fist in a terrific smash to the chin. The stranger dropped in a groaning heap.

Grinning, Jim picked up the gun. "Thought it'd be easy to outsmart a small-town peace officer, eh?" he snarled. "Wal, you just outsmarted YOURSELF...because poison ivy ain't poisonous when its leaves turn brown in the autumn! I'd have had no evidence against you if you hadn't tried runnin' away!"

BANTAM BUCKAROO

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE SHERIFF GETS HIMSELF PLUGGED-- LEAVING THE RANGE DEFENSELESS AGAINST THE QUICK-SHOOTING RAIDS OF A TOUGH HOMBRE LIKE **SHIFTY SMITH**? WELL, PARDNER-- IT BOILS DOWN TO A QUESTION OF SAVVY IN DEALING WITH VARMINTS-- AND THE BANTAM BUCKAROO'S RARIN' TO SHOW YOU THE METHOD!



AT THE HARNEY RANCH-- CRIMPERS, MIKE--

YUH'VE GOT NO CALL TUH LOBO-- I WISH BELITTLE **CHICO**-- JEST BE-YUH'D GIT RID O' CAUSE HE HAPPENS TUH BEA THAT SLAT-FACED **BUZZARD**! EVER SINCE CRITTER! I GIT I FIXED THAT BROKEN THE WILLIES JEST WING O' HIS'N A **LOOKIN'** COUPLE O' MONTHS AGO-- HE **LIKES** IT HERE! I JEST HAVEN'T GOT THE HEART TUH SHOO HIM AWAY!

MEBBE SO, LOBO-- BUT MIKE -- THAR'S A YUH'VE GOT TUH STOP HEAP O' WEASELS THAT THAR MONSTER. AN' RATS GITS INTUH FROM ROOSTIN' IN THAT COOP! AN' IF THE HEN HOUSE THAR'S ANYTHIN' EVERY NIGHT! I THAT'S PIZEN ON AIM TUH DRAW VARMINTS -- IT'S A **BUZZARD**!
THE LINE
SOMEWHAR!



SUDDENLY--ECHOING FROM THE DISTANCE--

HOPPIN' HORNED HARD TUH SAY, SON! RECKON TOADS-- WHAR'S THAR'S A RUCKUS MEBBE THOSE SHOTS COMIN' FROM, MIKE?

A MILE AWAY-- BUT THE DIRECTION'S PLUMB DECEIVIN'!
BANG!
BANG!

THEN--AS CHICO GLIDES SKYWARD
IN A SOARING SPIRAL--

WHAR IN TUNKET IS THAT BUZZARD O' YORES HEADIN', LOBO? I MEANT TUH TELL YUH-- I'VE GOT CHICO TRAINED! IF HE FINDS ANYONE LYIN' HELPLESS OUT ON THE RANGE -- HE'LL DRIVE THE OTHER BUZZARDS AWAY.. AN WAIT UNTIL HELP COMES! AN SHORE AS SHOOTIN', MIKE--HE'S SPOTTED SOMEONE OUT THAR NOW!

MINUTES LATER...

WHAT'D I TELL YUH, MIKE-- CHICO'S FOUND THE WADDY WHO GOT PLUGGED!

CRIMPIN' COYOTES-- THINGS MUST'VE BEEN POPPIN' FER SHORE! THAT'S THE SHERIFF!

YUH'RE SHOT UP PURTY BAD, AN' WITH A FAST DRAW LIKE YORES THAR'S JEST ONE WAY IT COULD'VE HAPPENED!

YEP--AMBUSH! I WAS TRAILIN' SHIFTY SMITH AN' HIS TWO PARDS..THEY DISMOUNTED AN' LET THEIR HOSSES AMBLE ON A SPELL-- AN' THEN THREW A PASSEL O' LEAD AT ME FROM BEHIND THEM ROCKS!



SHIFTY SMITH-- THE SHOOTIN'EST GALOOT FROM HERE TUH SANTY FEE ! CRIMPERS, SHERIFF, I THOUGHT YORE POSSE WAS CHASIN' THOSE POLECATS MILES FROM HERE !

THEY WAS, YOUNG FELLER -- BUT THE GANG MUST'VE DOUBLED BACK ! RECKON SHIFTY SMITH'S GITTIN' DESPERATE -- THAR'S A \$2.000 REWARD POSTED FER HIM, AN' A THOUSAND EACH FER HIS WADDIES -- AN' THEY DASN'T SHOW THEIR FACES ANYWAR, EVEN TUH GIT GRUB !



GOLLY! WITH THE SHERIFF PLUGGED WAL--DON'T FIGGER IT'LL BE YUH LOBO!

AN' THE POSSE I'LL BE AT THE HOOSEGOW ALL NIGHT, TAKIN' CHARGE, AFTER I GIT THE SHERIFF PATCHED UP-- AN' I WANT BACK-SHOOTIN' YOU AN' THAT VARMINTS! FLYIN' FLEA-BAG O' YORE'N TUH STAY PUT UNTIL I GIT BACK, SAVVY?

AS MIKE AND THE SHERIFF RIDE OFF--

I WAS SHORE HANKERIN' TUH COLLECT THAT \$4,000 REWARD, CHICO! RECKON MIKE'S GOT THE FINAL SAY-SO-- BUT IF SHIFTY SMITH STARTS ANYTHIN' -- YOU AN' ME ARE GOIN' TUH GIVE 'EM A COME-UPPANCE THEY'LL NEVER FERGIT!

LATE THAT NIGHT-- A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE HARNEY RANCH--

SHIFTY -- I'M PLUMB TUCKERED! DOESN'T SEEM TUH BE MUCH ACTIVITY DOWN THAR! WAIT HERE-- MUH BACKBONE'S I AIM TUH RUBBIN' UP AG'INST MUH BELT BUCKLE! FORAGE AROUND FER SOMETHIN' TUH CHAW ON!



MUST BE ALL KINDS O' VITTLIES
INSIDE THE HOUSE-- BUT THAR'S
NO USE TAKIN' A CHANCE!
I'LL SEE WHAT I KIN
GRAB IN THE CHICKEN
COOP!

CONSIDERIN' THAR'S THREE OF US
HUNGRY AS B'ARS-- I DON'T
WANT NOTHIN' FRYIN' SIZE!
HERE'S WHAT I'M AFTER--
THE BIGGEST ONE
ON THE ROOST!

CRIMPERS-- SOUNDS LIKE HAIL
COLUMBIA'S BROKEN OUT IN
THE CHICKEN HOUSE!



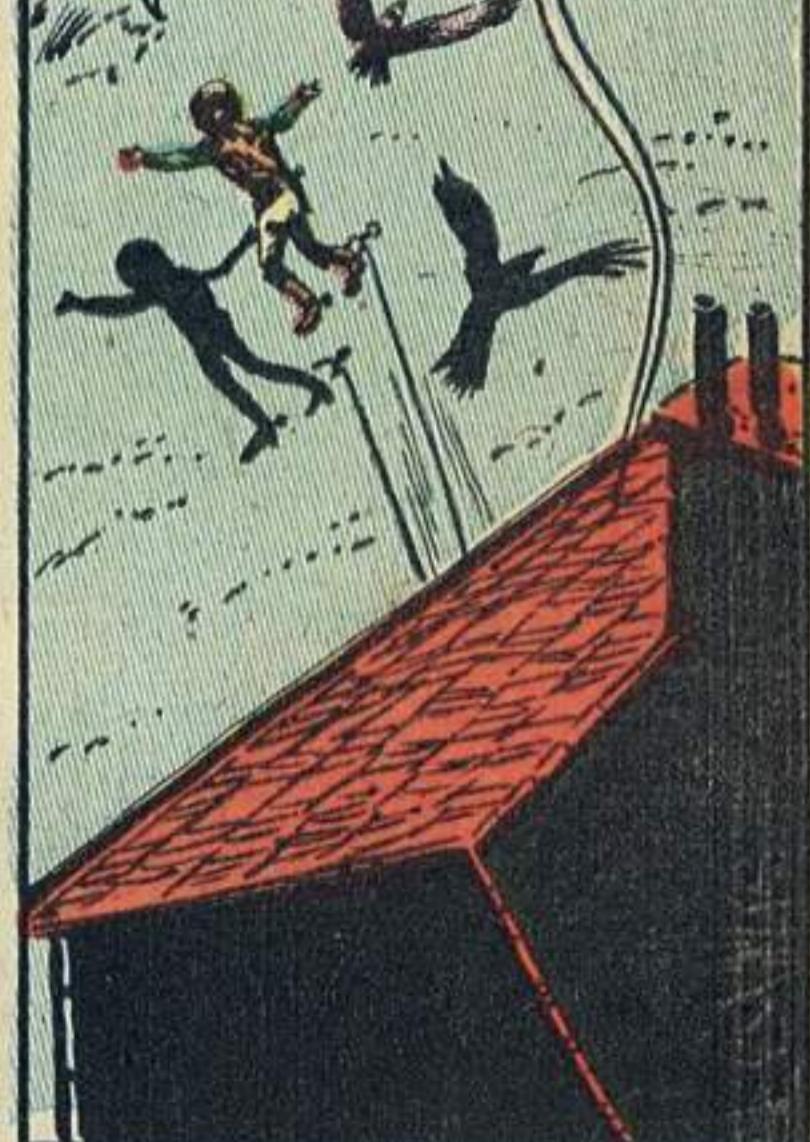
A MOMENT LATER...

HOPE THE BOYS HAVE A FIRE
READY! FROM THE HEFT OF IT-- THIS'LL
BE THE MEATIEST TURKEY WE EVER ET!
SUFFERIN' SASSAFRAS-- THAT WADDY'S
SNEAKIN' OFF WITH CHICO! WHAR'S MUH
ROPE?

THAT HALF-PINT'S SPOTTED ME!
I'D BETTER GET DOWN THAT SLOPE PRONTO -- BEFORE SOMEONE OPENS UP WITH A SCATTER GUN!

THEN-- CREEPERS-- MUH
ROPE LANDED SHORT!

OOOPS!



I SHORE HAVE 'DISMAL LUCK! HERE I AM HOPIN'
TUH CORRAL SHIFTY SMITH AN' HIS PARDS-- AN'
WHAT DO I GIT? AN ORNERY, NO-ACCOUNT
CHICKEN THIEF!



AS LOBO REACHES THE FOOT
OF THE SLOPE--

RIDERS! DURNED IF I KIN FIGGER WHAT'S KEEP-
HOLE UP-- IN' SHIFTY-- BUT I HEARD SOMETHIN'
SAVVY WHO MAKE A POWERFUL
CRASH!
THEY ARE!



SHIFTY! CRIMPIN' COYOTES-- NOW
I REMEMBER THAT MEAN-LOOKIN'
PUSS ON THE REWARD POSTERS!
THAT HOMBRE STRETCHED OUT
OVER THAR IS THE ONE AN' ONLY
SHIFTY SMITH-- AN' THESE
HERE ARE HIS TWO PARDS!



THEN, STARK AND STILL IN THE
RISING MOONLIGHT--

HOPPIN'
HORNED
TOADS--
LOOK!

SHIFTY!
THAT
BUZZARD'S
A SHORE
SIGN,
PINTO--
HE'S A
GONER!

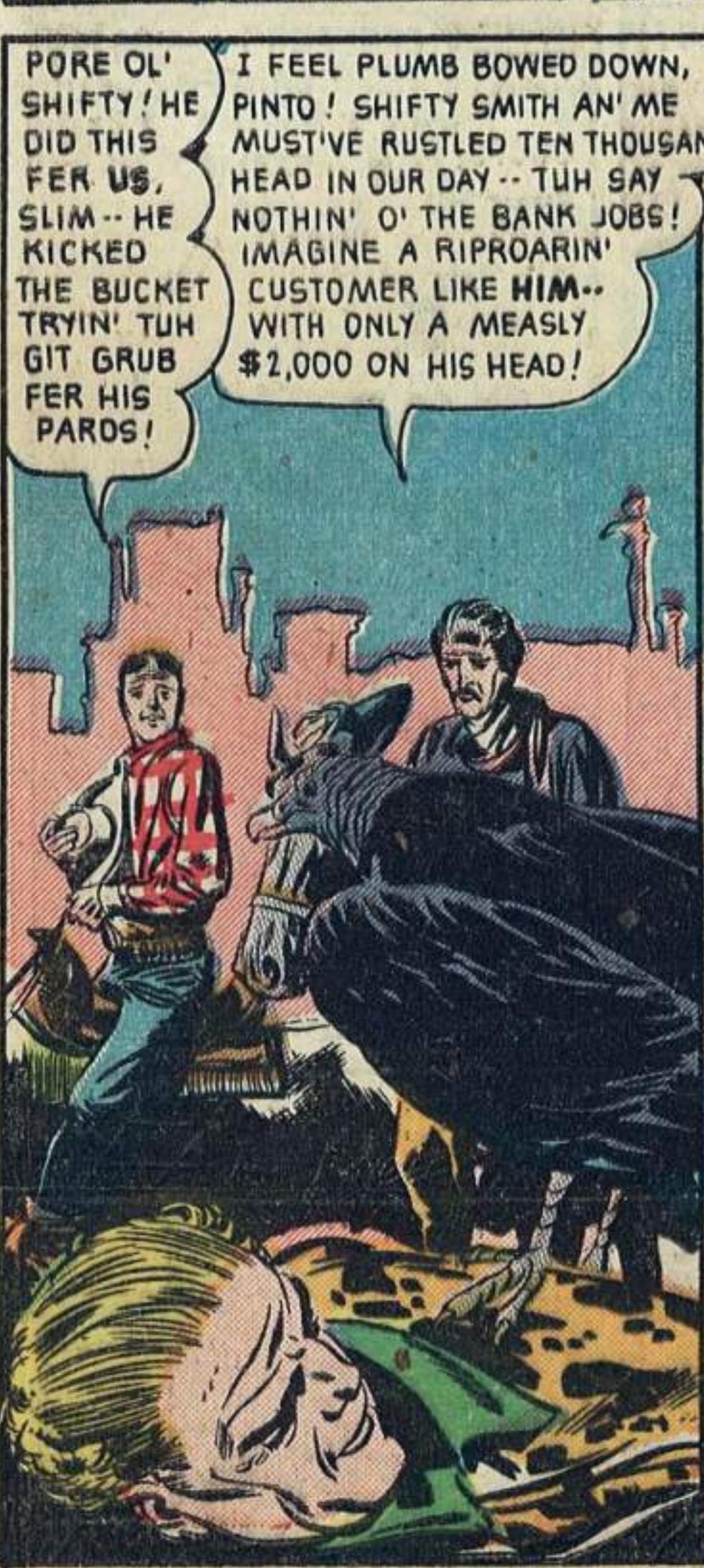


PORE OL'
SHIFTY! HE
DID THIS
FER US.
SLIM-- HE
KICKED
THE BUCKET
TRYIN' TUH
GIT GRUB
FER HIS
PARDS!

I FEEL PLUMB BOWED DOWN,
PINTO! SHIFTY SMITH AN' ME
MUST'VE RUSTLED TEN THOUSAND
HEAD IN OUR DAY -- TUH SAY
NOTHIN' O' THE BANK JOBS!
IMAGINE A RIPROARIN'
CUSTOMER LIKE HIM..
WITH ONLY A MEASLY
\$2,000 ON HIS HEAD!

I DUNNO, SLIM -- TWO
THOUSAND'S QUITE A
NICE HEAP O'
CHANGE!

COME TUH THINK OF IT -- YUH'RE
PLUMB RIGHT! PINTO-- MEBBE WE
OWE IT TUH SHIFTY'S MEMORY TUH
COLLECT THAT THAR REWARD!



THE SHERIFF IS LAID UP -- AND ALL HIS DEPUTIES ARE OUT
RIDIN' WITH THE POSSE -- AN' THEY'RE
THE ONLY HOMBRES IN TOWN WHO KIN
IDENTIFY US AS SHIFTY SMITH'S ACCOM-
PLICES! WE'LL TAKE THIS HERE BANDANNA
WITH SHIFTY'S INITIALS TUH THE
HOOSEGOW-- TUH CLINCH THINGS,
WE'LL GIT THE WADDY ON DUTY
TUH RIDE OUT AN' IDENTIFY THE
REMAINS -- AFTER WHICH WE'LL
HAVE A RIGHT TUH DEMAND
THE REWARD TONIGHT!

CRIMPERS! IF I KIN GIT TUH TOWN
AHEAD O' THOSE VARMINTS -- MIKE
WILL BE ABLE TUH NAB 'EM RIGHT
THAR IN THE HOOSEGOW!

JUMPIN' JIMSON--- I
FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN
TROMPLED BY A
BRAhma BULL!





SOME MORE
O' YORE CON-
SARNED
MONKEY-
SHINES,
EH?

THAR YUH ARE,
SHIFTY-- THE
GRUB'S ALL
YORES!



PLAP

BANG!

A MOMENT LATER...

THAT VARMINT WILL BE CHARGIN'
OUT WITH BLOOD IN HIS EYE ANY
SECOND -- BUT IF I KIN REACH
THE TOP SOON ENOUGH -- IT'S
ABOUT THE ONLY PLACE HE
WON'T THINK O' SEARCHIN'!



A-HA! I
FIGGERED
YUH
WOULDN'T
HAVE
TIME
TUH
GIT
YORE
HOSS
SADDLED!

CREEPERS-- NOW
I'M TRAPPED
FER SHORE!



I MANAGED TUH DUCK THAT
ONE -- BUT WITH SHIFTY
CLIMBIN' CLOSER -- I'M
GOIN' TUH NEED A
HEAP MORE'N
LUCK!

BANG!

SUDDENLY--

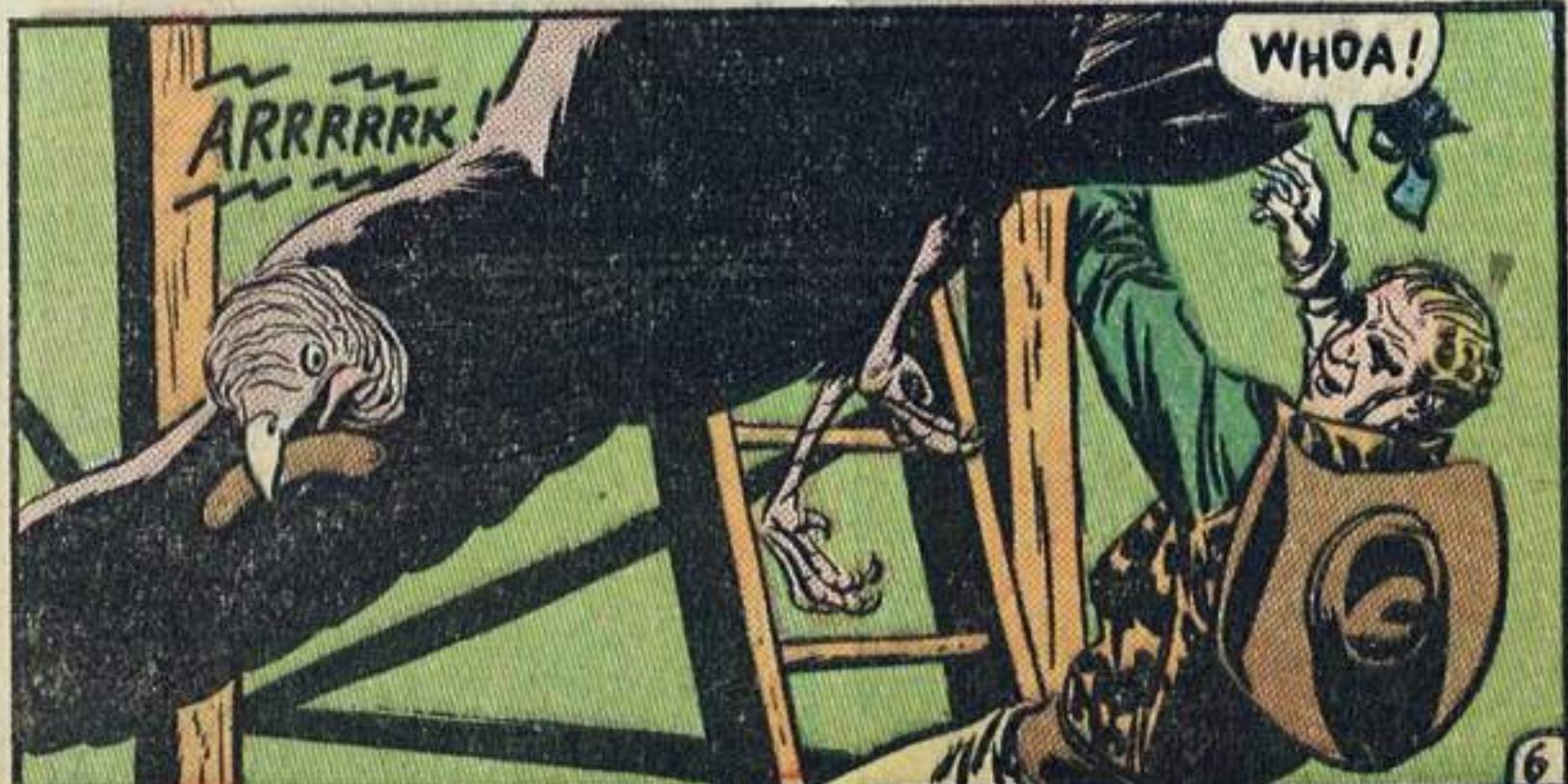
GOLLY--ONE O'THOSE SAUSAGES
LANDED ON SHIFTY'S HAT!
MEBBE I WAS JEST STALLIN'
WHEN I TOLD THAT BUZZARD I
WAS HUNGRY -- BUT WHEN IT
COMES TUH CHICO-- THAR'S
A BUZZARD THAT'S ALWAYS
HUNGRY



AT A WHISTLED SIGNAL FROM LOBO--

PHWEEEET!
GO GIT IT,
CHICO!

JUMPIN' BLUE
BLAZES -- IS
THAT GLASSY-
EYED SQUAB
LOOKIN'
AT ME?



SHORE WISH I COULD'VE DONE IT ANOTHER WAY -- MIKE'S COWS ARE PLUMB CHOOSY ABOUT POLLUTED WATER !

JEST WAIT,
YUH WHELP--
MY TURN'S COMIN'!

VAMOOSE,
CHICO-- BE-
FORE YUH'RE
BLASTED CLEAN
OUT O' YORE PIN
FEATHERS

GIT IN THAR! CHICO'S PLUMB SCARED O' SHIFTY BY NOW, SO HE'S SHORE TUH KEEP HIDDEN-- BUT I'M COUNTIN' ON HIM TUH MAKE A MITE O' NOISE, TOO!

SPLASH!

SECONDS LATER--

SOMETHIN'S RUSTLIN' IN THAT MANGER!
TOOK A MITE O' GOIN'-- BUT I'VE GOT
HIM CORNERED!

SQUAWK,
YUH RUNT--
IT'S
MUSIC
TUH
MUH
EARS!

YUH BY ANY
CHANCE REFERRIN'
TUH ME,
SHIFTY?

ARRK!
ARRRK!

AT THAT MOMENT--

YUH HOMBRES SHORE
CROSSED YORESELVES
UP, TELLING ME YUH
FOUND SHIFTY SMITH
PLUGGED AT THE
HARNEY RANCH --
WHEN I SAVVIED
LOBO'S HERE
ALONE-- AN'
THAT HE
DON'T FIDDLE
AROUND WITH
SIX GUNS!

YUH'RE THE ONE WHO MADE
THE MISTAKE, OL' TIMER--
SHOWIN YUH SUSPECTED US!
NOW THAT WE'VE ROBBED
THAT THAR REWARD MONEY
AT GUNPOINT, WE'RE
PLUGGIN BOTH YUH AN'
SHIFTY'S CARCASS--
TUH MAKE IT LOOK
LIKE YUH KILLED EACH
OTHER OFF IN A
GUN FIGHT!

ARRRRRK!

WHY, YUH LOW-SLUNG RANGE RAT--
SHOOTIN' ME IN COLD BLOOD'S
BAD ENOUGH-- BUT IF YUH KIN
STAND PUTTIN' LEAD INTUH THE
MORTAL REMAINS
O' SHIFTY SMITH--
SO HELP ME,
I HOPE HE
RISES UP AN'
SPOOKS YUH
FER THE REST
O' YORE
LIVES!

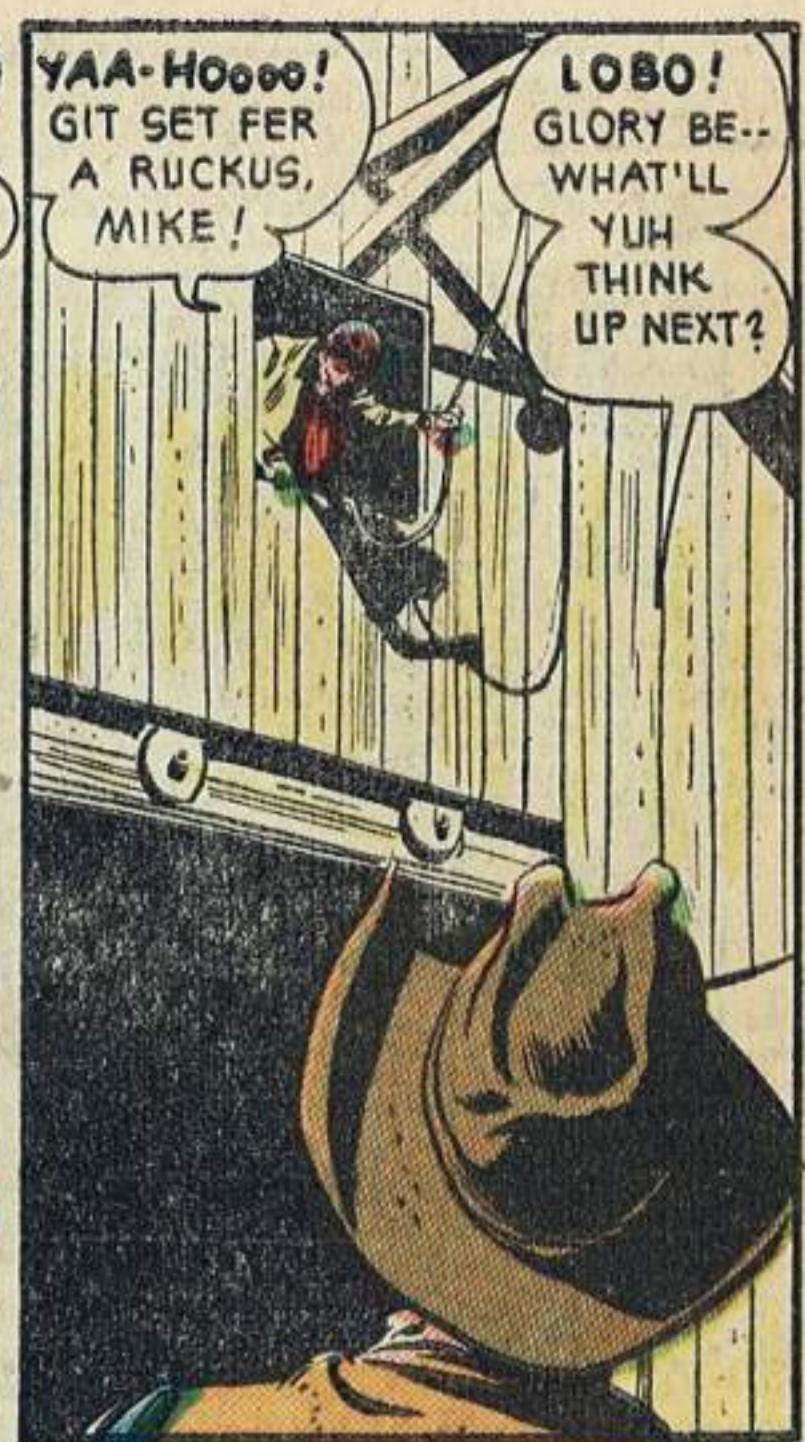
HOMBRE-- THE
DAY I'M HAUNTED
BY SHIFTY SMITH--
I'LL SAVVY IT'S TIME
I SHIED AWAY
FROM SALOONS!

HOLY
HOSS
MACK-
EREL--
LOOK!

IT'S SHIFTY'S GHOST
AN' HE'S A HEAP
MORE REPULSIVE
THAN HE USED TO BE!

YAA-HOOOG!
GIT SET FER
A RUCKUS,
MIKE!

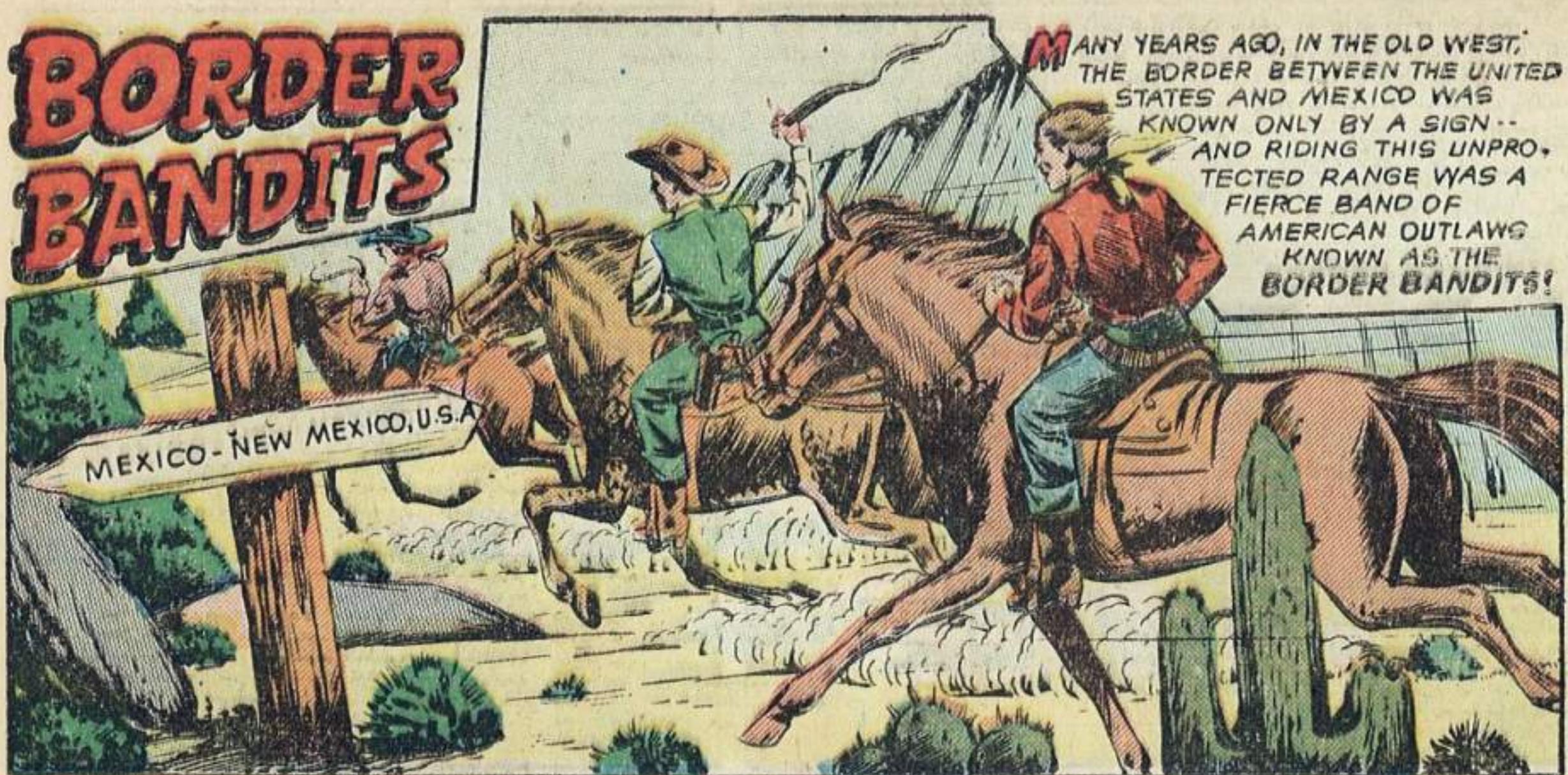
LOBO!
GLORY BE--
WHAT'LL
YUH
THINK
UP NEXT?



Your Pulse will be bouncing like a Chuck-Wagon when **THE BANTAM BUCKAROO** squares off for Trouble--
IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

THE END ®

BORDER BANDITS



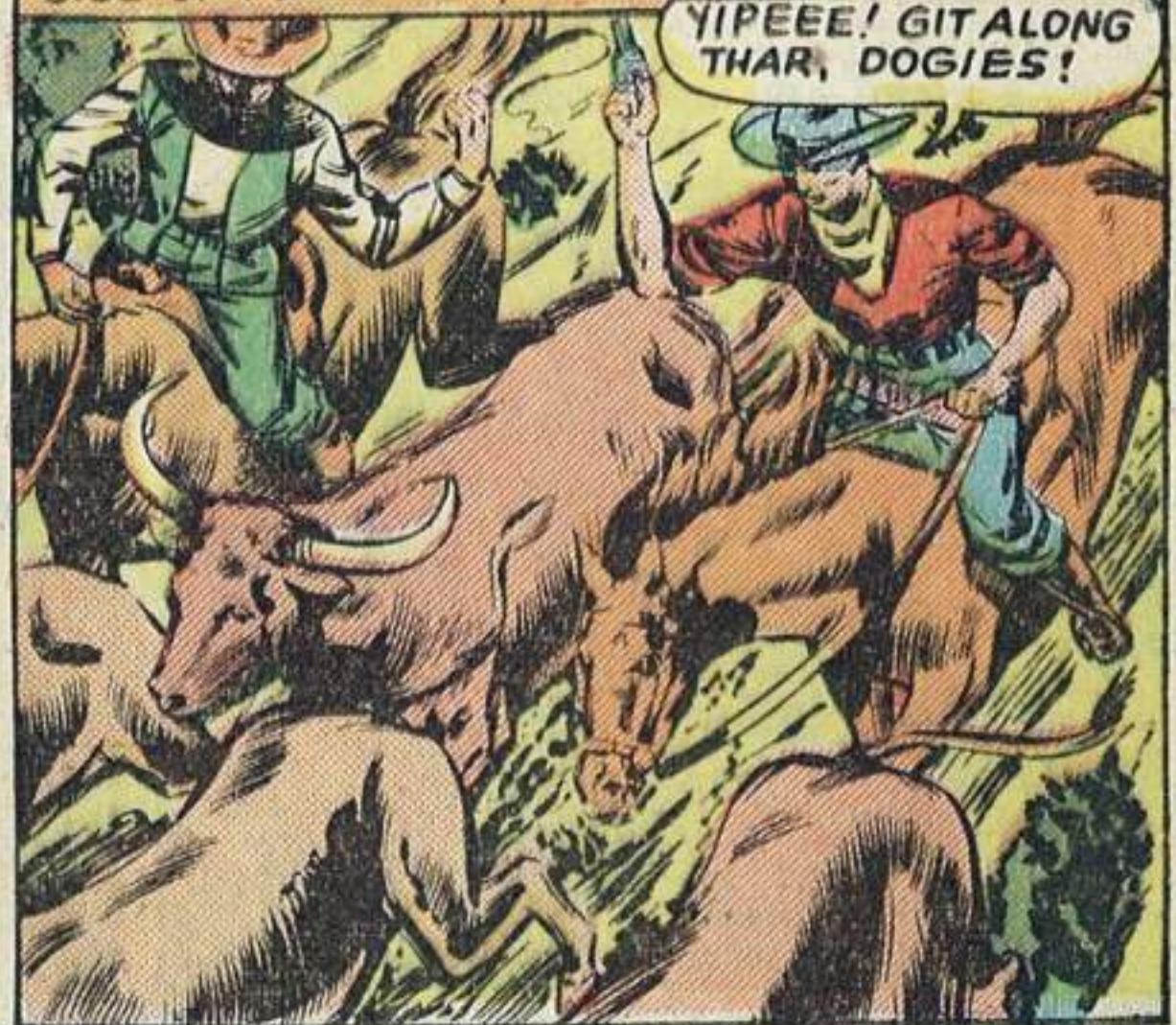
THE BANDITS BEGAN THEIR DEPREDACTIONS BY HOLDING UP STAGECOACHES CARRYING PASSENGERS AND MAIL -- AND THEY SOON FORCED A HALT IN PRACTICALLY ALL TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES!

MANY YEARS AGO, IN THE OLD WEST, THE BORDER BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO WAS KNOWN ONLY BY A SIGN -- AND RIDING THIS UNPROTECTED RANGE WAS A FIERCE BAND OF AMERICAN OUTLAWS KNOWN AS THE BORDER BANDITS!

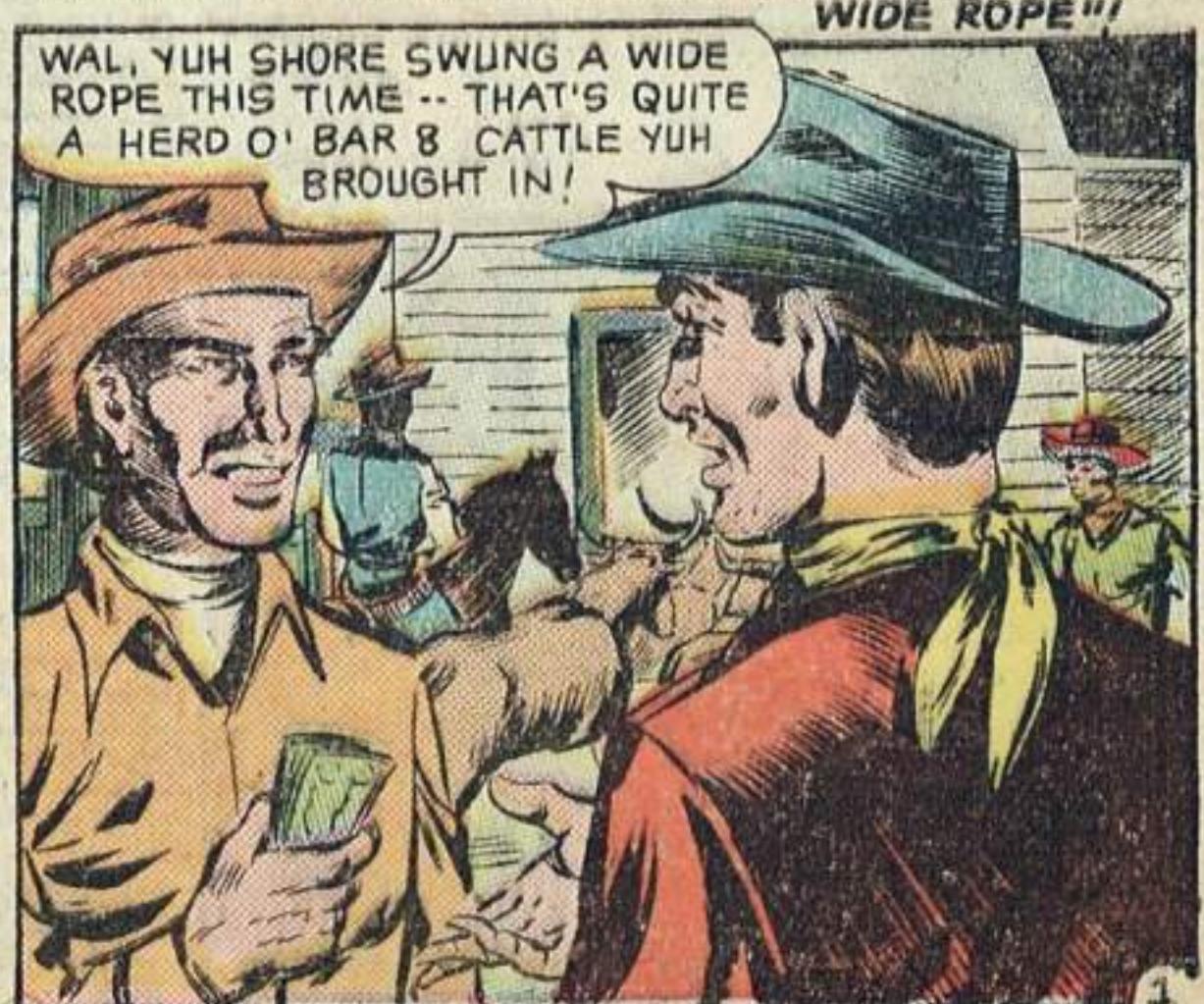


ONCE ON THE AMERICAN SIDE, THE RUSTLERS WOULD RE-BRAND THE CATTLE WITH A "RUNNING IRON" -- WHICH WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A RED-HOT POKER!

THEN THE OUTLAWS TURNED TO RUSTLING CATTLE FROM THE RICH SPANISH RANCHERS ON THE MEXICAN SIDE OF THE BORDER!



CERTAIN UNETHICAL AMERICAN RANCHERS ASKED NO QUESTIONS WHEN THEY BOUGHT THE CATTLE FROM THE OUTLAWS -- IN FACT, THEY GRINNINLY CALLED IT "SWINGIN' A WIDE ROPE"!



AFTER DIVIDING THEIR LOOT, THE BORDER BANDITS WOULD RIDE INTO THE NEARBY TOWNS IN THE SAN SIMON VALLEY TO GAMBLE AND DRINK AND FIGHT-- AND THE TOWNSPEOPLE ALWAYS MADE SURE TO GIVE THEM PLENTY OF ELBOW ROOM!

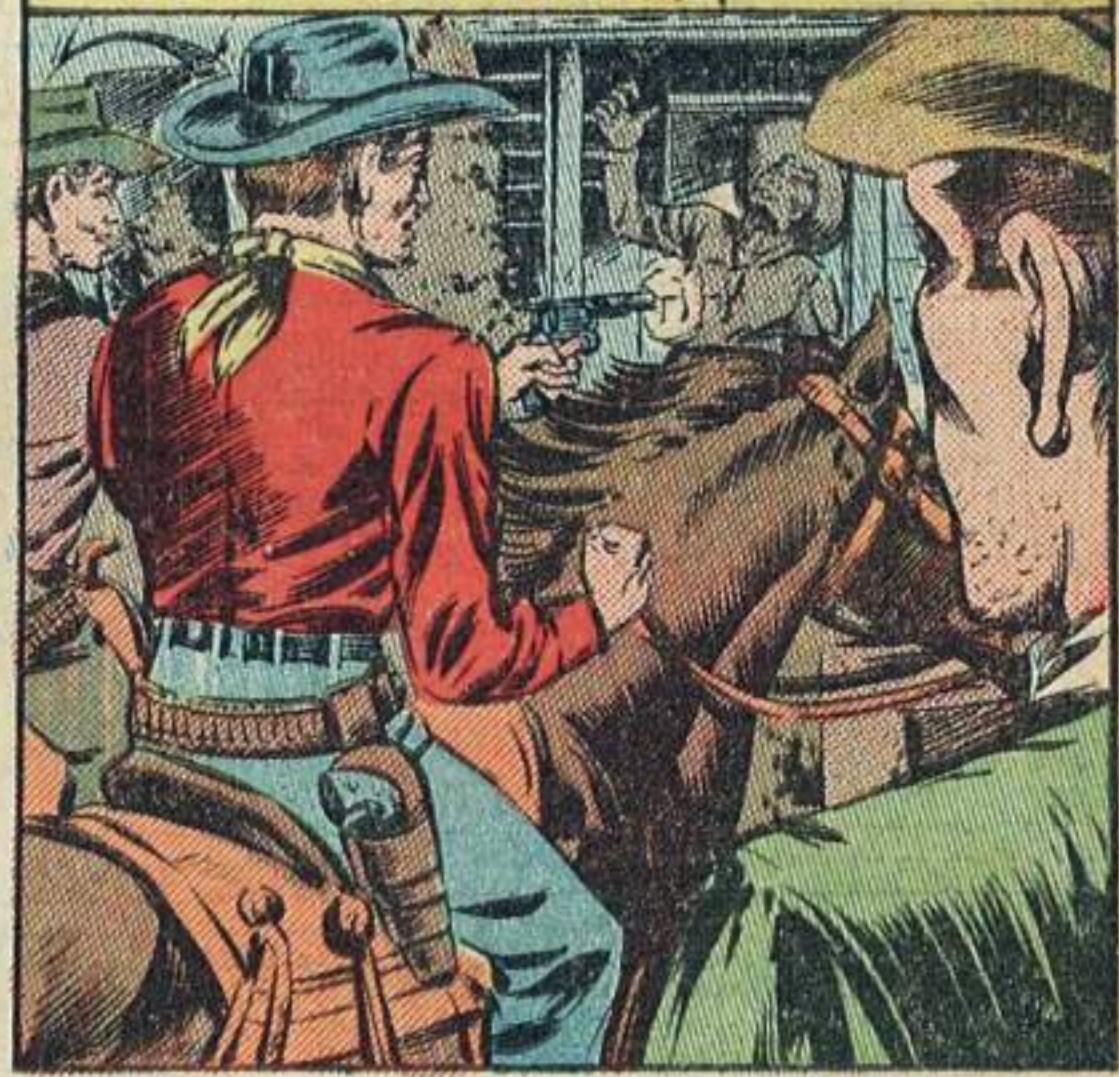
RUN FOR COVER-- THE BORDER BANDITS ARE BACK!

BANG!

BANG!



THEN, WHEN THE OUTLAWS NEEDED MORE MONEY, BACK THEY'D RIDE TO THE MEXICAN RANCHES-- FOR MORE PLUNDER!



FINALLY, THE MEXICAN RANCHERS IN THE AREA Banded together to protect their lives and property!

THE BANDITOS MUST BE STOPPED-- BEFORE THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH OF US LEFT TO FIGHT THEM!

SI-- DEATH TO THE BANDITOS!



THE NEXT TIME THE BANDITS MADE A RAID ACROSS THE BORDER, THEY FOUND RANCH AFTER RANCH STRANGELY DESERTED-- UNTIL THEY CAME UPON ONE RANCH THAT WAS STOUTLY DEFENDED BY PRACTICALLY EVER MEXICAN IN THE AREA! ENRAGED BY THIS SHOW OF RESISTANCE, THE OUTLAWS IMMEDIATELY LAID SEIGE TO THE RANCH-HOUSE!

GIT A WAGON FULL O' HAY FROM THEIR BARN AN' SET FIRE TO IT-- WE'LL SOON SMOKE 'EM OUT!



BUT BEFORE THE OUTLAWS COULD SEND THE BLAZING HAY WAGON CRASHING INTO THE RANCH-HOUSE, A LARGE FORCE OF U.S. RANGERS ARRIVED ON THE SCENE, DETERMINED TO WIPE OUT THE BORDER BANDITS ONCE AND FOR ALL!



ALL BUT FIVE OF THE BANDITOS DIED UNDER THE BLAZING SIX-GUNS OF THE RANGERS-- AND THOSE FIVE WENT TO THE GALLows, A GRIM REMINDER THAT LIFE AND PROPERTY IN THE WEST WERE TO BE HELD SACRED, NO MATTER WHAT THE NATIONALITY!



FLASH!

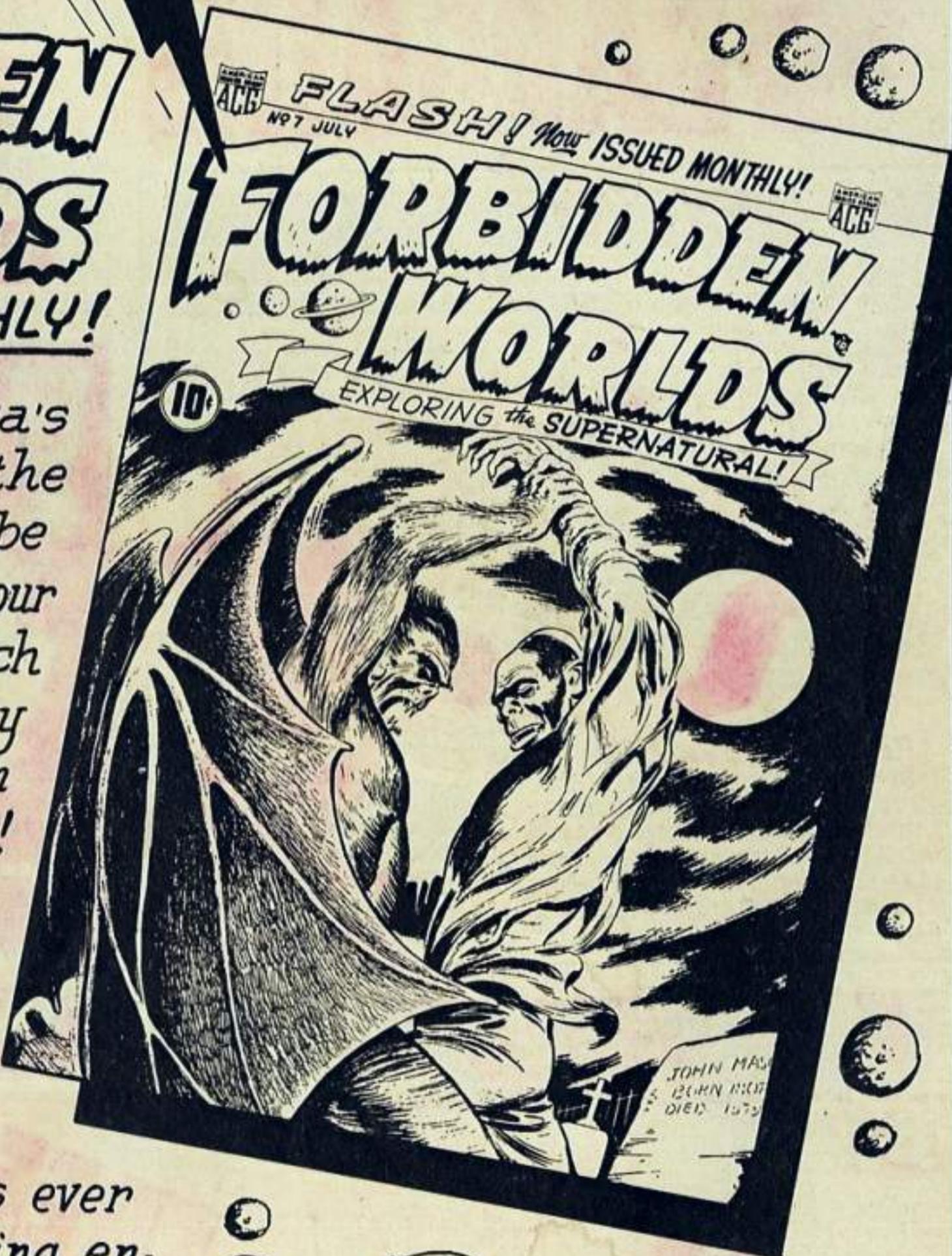
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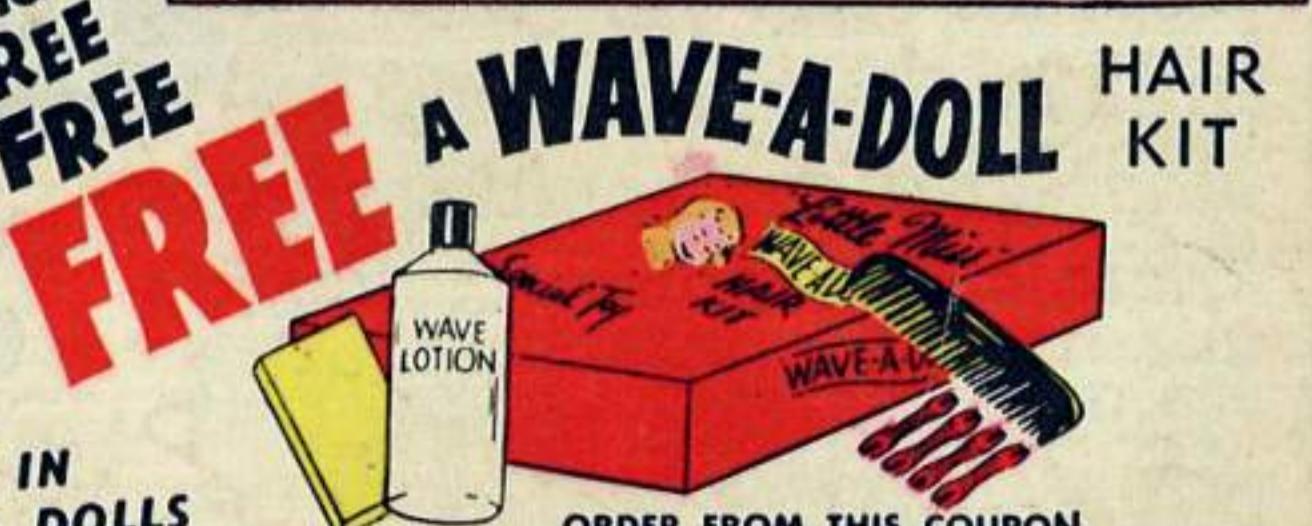
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